COMMITTEE REPORT

May 24, 2016

**S. 680**

Introduced by Senators Rankin and Hembree

S. Printed 5/24/16--H.

Read the first time May 3, 2016.

**THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NATURAL**

**RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

To whom was referred a Bill (S. 680) to amend the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, by adding Section 47‑1‑145, to enact the “Provisions for Cost of Animal Care Act of, etc., respectfully

**REPORT:**

That they have duly and carefully considered the same and recommend that the same do pass:

DAVID R. HIOTT for Committee.

**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 47‑1‑145, TO ENACT THE “PROVISIONS FOR COST OF ANIMAL CARE ACT OF 2015”, TO PROVIDE THAT THE CUSTODIAN OF AN ANIMAL TAKEN INTO CUSTODY DUE TO CIVIL OR CRIMINAL VIOLATIONS BY ITS OWNER MAY PETITION THE COURT FOR EXPENSES RELATED TO PROVIDING CARE TO THE ANIMAL, TO ESTABLISH PROCEDURES FOR HEARING SUCH PETITIONS AND FOR THE COLLECTION AND USE OF FUNDS ORDERED TO BE PAID, TO PROVIDE THAT A PERSON WHO FAILS TO PAY SUCH FUNDS FORFEITS RIGHTS OF OWNERSHIP TO THE ANIMAL, TO PROVIDE FOR THE DISPOSITION OF SUCH AN ANIMAL, AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE RETURN OF FUNDS WHEN A PERSON IS NOT FOUND TO BE IN VIOLATION; TO AMEND SECTION 47‑1‑130, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO CRUELTY TO ANIMALS, TO PROVIDE THAT AGENTS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS, OR ANY OTHER SOCIETY DULY INCORPORATED FOR THAT PURPOSE, MAY ASSIST WITH A LAWFUL INVESTIGATION OF THIS CHAPTER, BUT MAY ONLY EFFECTUATE AN ARREST OF A PERSON IF THEY HAVE BEEN VESTED WITH THE POWER TO ARREST BY A SHERIFF OR THE GOVERNING BODY OF A COUNTY OR MUNICIPALITY; AND TO AMEND SECTION 47‑1‑140, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO NOTICE PROVIDED TO THE OWNER OF ANIMALS WHICH HAVE BEEN SEIZED FROM OTHERS UPON ARREST, TO REMOVE SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR AGENTS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS, OR ANY OTHER SOCIETY DULY INCORPORATED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. This act may be cited as the “Provisions for Cost of Animal Care Act of 2015”.

SECTION 2. Chapter 1, Title 47 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 47‑1‑145. (A) Any person, organization, or other entity that is awarded custody of an animal under the provisions of Section 47‑1‑150 because of the arrest of a defendant for a violation of any provision of Chapter 1, Title 47 or Chapter 24, Title 16 and that provides services to the animal without compensation, may file a petition with the court requesting that the defendant, if found guilty, be ordered to deposit funds in an amount sufficient to secure payment of all the reasonable expenses incurred by the custodian in caring for and providing for the animal pending the disposition of the litigation. In the absence of a conviction, the county or municipality making the arrest shall pay the reasonable expenses of the custodian. For purposes of this section, ‘court’ refers to municipal or magistrate’s court and ‘reasonable expenses’ includes the cost of providing food, water, shelter, and care, including medical care, but does not include extraordinary medical procedures.

(B) The court shall, at the time of adjudication, determine the actual cost of care for the animal the custodian incurred pursuant to subsection (A). Either party may demand that the trial be given priority over other cases.

(C)(1) If the court makes a final determination of the charges or claims against the defendant in his favor, then the defendant may recover custody of his animal.

(2) If the defendant is found guilty, the custodian of the animal may then determine whether the animal is suitable for adoption and whether adoption can be arranged for the animal. The animal may not be adopted by the defendant or by any person residing in the defendant’s household if the defendant was found guilty. If no adoption can be arranged after the forfeiture, or the animal is unsuitable for adoption, the custodian shall humanely euthanize the animal.

(D) Within thirty days of an animal’s impoundment, the animal’s custodian must provide a good faith estimate, pursuant to subsection (A), of the daily custodial cost of the impounded animal. Upon receipt of the good faith estimate, the court shall then issue a notice to the defendant about his impounded animal that includes:

(1) an estimate of the daily custodial costs required to care for the animal;

(2) a statement that the defendant, if found guilty, shall be required to pay for the animal’s care during impoundment; and

(3) a statement that the defendant at any time prior to final adjudication, has the right to forfeit ownership of the animal and avoid all accrued custodial costs related to the animal’s care.

(E) The remedy provided for in this section is in addition to any other remedy provided by law.”

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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