

A RESOLUTION

22-27

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

February 7, 2017

To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to clarify the requirements for protecting a dog from extreme weather conditions.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Extreme Weather Protection for Animals Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2017”.

Sec. 2. (a) There exists an immediate need to strengthen the current definition of what constitutes protection from the weather for dogs.

(b) During the weekend of January 7th, 2017, in Ward 4, the Humane Rescue Alliance (“HRA”), by law, was unable to remove the pitbull, “Momma,” from a property.

(c) Ward 4 neighbors called HRA multiple times over that weekend when temperatures dropped below freezing and there appeared to be no one around taking care of the dog.

(d) HRA visited the dog numerous times throughout the weekend to monitor her well-being.

(e) The HRA determined the outdoor structure that housed the dog complied with current District law, and, therefore, HRA had no grounds to remove the dog.

(f) The accompanying emergency bill, developed in consultation with the Department of Health and HRA, aims to address the gaps in the law by defining “protection from the weather” to ensure there is not another incident like this.

(g) The new definition requires that a space protect the dog from injury, rain, sleet, snow, hail, the adverse effects of cold, physical suffering, and impairment of health and that a shelter be raised at least 4 inches from the ground, include a heat-retaining, moisture-wicking substance such as straw, and have a covered wind block.

(h) While the District’s animal laws are some of the strongest in the country, the current law does not have adequate safeguards for extreme weather conditions.

(i) The emergency bill includes a penalty for failure to provide protection from the weather during emergency cold alerts.

(j) This legislation will ensure that, for duration of winter, there will be safeguards in place until a permanent version can be enacted.

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the circumstances enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it necessary that the Extreme Weather Protection for Animals Emergency Amendment Act of 2017 be adopted after a single reading.

Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.