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<p style="text-align:center">**HOUSE BILL NO. 1238**</p>

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2 <p style="text-align:center">Offered January 14, 2026</p>
3 <p style="text-align:center">Prefiled January 14, 2026</p>
4 *A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 3.2-6537 and 3.2-6543 of the Code of Virginia, relating to local ordinances;*
5 *regulation of pet shops.*
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<p style="text-align:center">Patron—Shin</p>

7 <p style="text-align:center">————————</p>
8 <p style="text-align:center">Committee Referral Pending</p>
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10 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**
11 **1. That §§ 3.2-6537 and 3.2-6543 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**
12 **§ 3.2-6537. Ordinances; penalties.**
13 *A.* The governing body of any locality may, by ordinance, require a person operating a pet shop or
14 operating as a dealer in companion animals to obtain a permit. Such local governing body may charge no
15 more than $50 per year for such permit. The revenues derived therefrom shall be used for the administration
16 and enforcement of such ordinance.
17 *1.* The aforementioned ordinance may provide: (i) that records be kept by the permittees as are deemed
18 necessary; (ii) for public hearing prior to issuance, renewal, or revocation of any such permit; or (iii) for the
19 denial of issuance, denial of renewal, or ~~for the~~ revocation of such permit for fraudulent practices or
20 inhumane treatment of the animals dealt with by the permittee.
21 *2.* The ordinance may provide for either a criminal penalty not to exceed a Class 3 misdemeanor or a civil
22 penalty not to exceed $500 for any violation of the ordinance. Any civil penalties collected shall be deposited
23 by the local treasurer pursuant to § 3.2-6534.
24 *B. The governing body of any locality may, by ordinance, regulate or restrict the acquisition, marketing,*
25 *and sale of animals in a pet shop, provided that such ordinance is consistent with state law. Any ordinance*
26 *adopted pursuant to this subsection may distinguish between certain types of pet shops and include*
27 *provisions to require special licensing, inspections, reporting, or restrictions on the sale of certain animals.*
28 **§ 3.2-6543. Governing body of any locality may adopt certain ordinances.**
29 A. The governing body of any locality of the Commonwealth may adopt, and make more stringent,
30 ordinances that parallel §§ *3.2-6511, 3.2-6511.1,* 3.2-6521 through 3.2-6539, 3.2-6546 through 3.2-6555,
31 3.2-6562, 3.2-6569, 3.2-6570, 3.2-6574 through 3.2-6580, and 3.2-6585 through 3.2-6590. Any town may
32 choose to adopt by reference any ordinance of the surrounding county adopted under this section to be
33 applied within its town limits, in lieu of adopting an ordinance of its own.
34 Any funds collected pursuant to the enforcement of ordinances adopted pursuant to the provisions of this
35 section may be used for the purpose of defraying the costs of local animal control, including efforts to
36 promote sterilization of cats and dogs.
37 B. Any locality may, by ordinance, establish uniform schedules of civil penalties for violations of specific
38 provisions of ordinances adopted pursuant to this section. Civil penalties may not be imposed for violations
39 of ordinances that parallel § 3.2-6570. Designation of a particular violation for a civil penalty shall be in lieu
40 of criminal sanctions and preclude prosecution of such violation as a criminal misdemeanor. The schedule for
41 civil penalties shall be uniform for each type of specified violation and the penalty for any one violation shall
42 not be more than $150. Imposition of civil penalties shall not preclude an action for injunctive, declaratory or
43 other equitable relief. Moneys raised pursuant to this subsection shall be placed in the locality's general fund.
44 An animal control officer or law-enforcement officer may issue a summons for a violation. Any person
45 summoned or issued a ticket for a scheduled violation may make an appearance in person or in writing by
46 mail to the department of finance or the treasurer of the locality issuing the summons or ticket prior to the
47 date fixed for trial in court. Any person so appearing may enter a waiver of trial, admit liability, and pay the
48 civil penalty established for the offense charged.