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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING**

**Senator Jim Beall, Chair**

**2017 - 2018 Regular**

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**Bill No:** SB 673 **Hearing Date:** 4/25/2017  
**Author:** Newman  
**Version:** 2/17/2017  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Randy Chinn

**SUBJECT:** Pet Lover's specialized license plates.

**DIGEST:** This bill allocates the revenue raised from the sale of the Pet Lover's license plate to the Department of Food and Agriculture (Department). The Department is authorized to allocate those funds to a nonprofit organization for disbursal to qualifying spay and neuter facilities for the purpose of funding grants to providers of no- and low-cost animal sterilization purposes.

**ANALYSIS:**

*Existing law:*

- 1) Provides for a specialized license plate program, under which the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) may issue new special-interest license plates. A minimum of 7,500 applications and accompanying fees are required before the DMV will issue the plate.
- 2) Allocates the revenue from the Pet Lover's license plate to the Veterinary Medical Board (VMB) for disbursal to qualifying spay and neuter facilities.

This bill replaces the VMB with the Department of Food and Agriculture.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) *Purpose.* According to the author, the over \$800,000 in revenues raised from the sale of the Pet Lover's License Plate has not been spent on its intended purpose, which is to provide no- or low-cost animal sterilization services. This bill authorizes the Department to administer the program and to delegate their disbursal authority through a non-profit organization to qualified spay and neuter facilities.

- 2) *Third Time's the Charm?* The initial attempts to use the VMB to disburse the Pet Lover's funding were first thwarted by concerns over the VMBs authority to utilize qualified non-profits to help disburse the funds. Legislation was passed in 2015 to clarify that VMB had that authority. In its January 2016 board meeting the VMB attempted to select a qualified non-profit but was advised that the nonprofit would need to be chosen through a competitive bid process. At its April 2016 board meeting, some members of the VMB noted potential conflict of interest issues had been raised regarding VMBs selection of the non-profit. The board directed its Executive Officer to seek to transfer the Pet Lover's license plate program to the Department, which this bill does.
- 3) *Finding a Good Home.* The Department may well be the most appropriate state agency to administer these funds as it currently runs a similar program. The Prevention of Animal Homelessness and Cruelty Fund is a tax check-off created in 2015 which is administered by the Department to support spay and neuter activities. As this bill progresses the author may wish to consider linking this funding to the Department's existing program, which should reduce administrative costs and put the funding to good use more quickly.

**RELATED LEGISLATION:**

**AB 192 (Allen, Chapter 497 of 2015)** — Authorized the VMB to utilize a non-profit to administer the Pet Lover's license plate funding.

**AB 485 (Williams, Chapter 557 of 2015)** — Authorized the Prevention of Animal Homelessness and Cruelty Fund tax check-off to the personal income tax return.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No    Fiscal Com.: Yes    Local: No

**POSITIONS:** (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, April 19, 2017.)

**SUPPORT:**

Social Compassion in Legislation

**OPPOSITION:**

None received.

**END**