

Washington Pet Warranty Bill Covers Birds

Washington state committee proposes pet warranty bill that includes pet birds

News Division

Pet birds, as well as dogs and cats, are included in the proposed pet warranty bill. Courtesy Carolyn Vickrey, Illinois

The Washington House Committee on Commerce and Labor will hear a proposed pet warranty bill that was introduced Monday, January 14, 2008.

Unlike many other pet warranty bills, the Washington proposal would cover birds as well as dogs and cats.

The legislation would affect any pet dealer (store or breeder selling more than 20 animals or three litters within 12 months) selling dogs, cats or birds of any age, according to the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council.

Among other things, the legislation prohibits pet dealers from selling animals with obvious signs of disease or abnormality or with known illnesses or conditions requiring hospitalization.

The legislation would cover animals for 20 days from purchase for pre-existing conditions or diseases before or at delivery of the animal and for two years from purchase for congenital or hereditary conditions.

Moreover, it allows purchasers a full refund or exchange value for the purchase price and reimbursement of veterinary fees for the diagnosis and treatment of a covered animal or to retain the animal and receive reimbursement of veterinary fees for up to 150 percent of the animal's original purchase price.

Refunds and reimbursements would not be made in cases where illness or death resulted from neglect or maltreatment occurring after the purchase, in cases where the purchaser does not follow veterinary recommendations for treatment of a diagnosed illness or condition, and in cases in which the condition was disclosed in writing at the time of the sale.

Pet dealers would have 10 business days following the receipt of a veterinarian's statement attesting to the animal suffering from a covered condition to make refund and reimbursement payments. The pet dealer could pay for an independent veterinary exam to dispute or confirm the initial veterinary statement.

In addition, the bill would require pet dealers to have veterinarians examine all animals within 30 days of the sale of an animal. At the time of purchase, dealers would need to provide purchasers a written statement that contains information about the bird, including its birth date; the breeder's name and address (if unknown, the name of the entity selling the animal to the pet dealer); breed, sex and any identifying marks of the animal; information on the sire, dam and litter for animals sold as registerable; record of inoculations and parasite treatments and other treatments and medications given the animal; and records of any veterinary diagnoses.

The legislation would require pet dealers to maintain records on each animal sold for three years.

Pet dealers would also need to post signs notifying would-be purchasers that they have certain rights.