

First Regular Session
Seventy-fifth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

DRAFT
9/4/24

Bill 5

LLS NO. 25-0158.01 Christopher McMichael x4775 INTERIM COMMITTEE BILL

Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee

BILL TOPIC: Access to Veterinary Care Advisory Group
DEADLINES: File by: 8/28/2024

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING THE CREATION OF THE ACCESS TO VETERINARY CARE**
102 **ADVISORY GROUP WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.**

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov/>.)

Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee. The bill establishes the access to veterinary care advisory group (advisory group) within the division of animal welfare in the department of agriculture. The advisory group consists of stakeholders who are tasked with considering issues and making policy recommendations related to providing financial assistance for veterinary care to income-qualified pet

*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing law.*

owners in Colorado. The advisory group must submit a report of its findings and policy recommendations to the house agriculture, water, and natural resources committee; the senate agriculture and natural resources committee; and the governor's office by September 1, 2026.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 35-1-122 as
3 follows:

4 **35-1-122. Access to veterinary care advisory group - creation**
5 **- membership - issues of study - report - definitions - repeal.**

6 (1) **Definitions.** AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT
7 OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

8 (a) "ADVISORY GROUP" MEANS THE ACCESS TO VETERINARY CARE
9 ADVISORY GROUP ESTABLISHED IN SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION.

10 (b) "DIVISION" MEANS THE DIVISION OF ANIMAL WELFARE WITHIN
11 THE DEPARTMENT, AS ESTABLISHED IN SECTION 35-1-108.

12 (c) "INCOME-QUALIFIED PET OWNER" MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO:

13 (I) OWNS A PET ANIMAL; AND

14 (II) IS A RECIPIENT OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UNDER MEDICAID OR
15 ONE OR MORE OTHER STATE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

16 (d) "PET ANIMAL" MEANS A DOMESTIC DOG OR DOMESTIC CAT
17 THAT IS BEING KEPT AS A HOUSEHOLD PET AND DOES NOT INCLUDE AN
18 ANIMAL THAT IS USED FOR WORKING PURPOSES ON A FARM OR RANCH.

19 (e) "VETERINARY CARE" MEANS MEDICAL CARE PROVIDED TO A
20 PET ANIMAL BY VETERINARY PROFESSIONALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH
21 ARTICLE 315 OF TITLE 12.

22 (2) **Creation - membership.** (a) THERE IS CREATED IN THE
23 DIVISION THE ACCESS TO VETERINARY CARE ADVISORY GROUP FOR THE

1 PURPOSES OF CONSIDERING ISSUES AND PROPOSING RECOMMENDATIONS
2 REGARDING POLICIES OR PROGRAMS THAT ENABLE ALL COLORADANS TO
3 ACCESS AFFORDABLE AND APPROPRIATE VETERINARY CARE.

4 (b) THE ADVISORY GROUP CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS
5 APPOINTED BY THE COMMISSIONER:

6 (I) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A LICENSED VETERINARIAN WHO
7 PRACTICES VETERINARY MEDICINE ON COMPANION ANIMALS IN
8 COLORADO;

9 (II) ONE MEMBER WHO IS AN INCOME-QUALIFIED PET OWNER IN
10 COLORADO;

11 (III) ONE MEMBER WHO REPRESENTS THE DIVISION;

12 (IV) ONE MEMBER WHO REPRESENTS AN ORGANIZATION IN
13 COLORADO AIMED AT PROVIDING PET OWNERS ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE
14 AND APPROPRIATE VETERINARY CARE;

15 (V) ONE MEMBER WHO REPRESENTS A VETERINARY HOSPITAL OR
16 GROUP THAT PROVIDES VETERINARY SERVICES TO PET OWNERS IN
17 COLORADO;

18 (VI) ONE MEMBER WHO REPRESENTS A HUMANE SOCIETY OR
19 ANIMAL SHELTER THAT PROVIDES VETERINARY SERVICES TO THE GENERAL
20 PUBLIC; AND

21 (VII) ONE MEMBER WHO IS A RESIDENT OF COLORADO AND WHO
22 IS NOT A PET OWNER.

23 (c) (I) THE COMMISSIONER SHALL APPOINT MEMBERS OF THE
24 ADVISORY GROUP PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (2)(b) OF THIS SECTION ON
25 OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1, 2025.

26 (II) THE COMMISSIONER SHALL FILL ANY VACANCY THAT OCCURS
27 AMONG THE APPOINTED MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY GROUP AS SOON AS

1 PRACTICABLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (2)(b) OF THIS SECTION.

2 (III) IN MAKING THE APPOINTMENTS TO THE ADVISORY GROUP, THE
3 COMMISSIONER SHALL STRIVE TO ENSURE THAT THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE
4 ADVISORY GROUP:

5 (A) REFLECTS THE RACIAL, ETHNIC, CULTURAL, AND GENDER
6 DIVERSITY OF THE STATE;

7 (B) INCLUDES DIVERSE GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION, INCLUDING
8 INDIVIDUALS WHO DO NOT RESIDE IN THE FRONT RANGE REGION OF THE
9 STATE; AND

10 (C) INCLUDES REPRESENTATION FROM COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE
11 HISTORICALLY EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTIES ACCESSING AFFORDABLE AND
12 APPROPRIATE VETERINARY CARE.

13 (3) **Issues of study.** THE ADVISORY GROUP SHALL CONSIDER
14 ISSUES AND PREPARE A REPORT THAT MAKES POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
15 TO THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE, WATER, AND NATURAL RESOURCES
16 COMMITTEE; THE SENATE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
17 COMMITTEE; AND THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE RELATED TO:

18 (a) REDUCING BARRIERS TO ACCESSING AFFORDABLE AND
19 APPROPRIATE VETERINARY CARE THAT INCOME-QUALIFIED PET OWNERS IN
20 COLORADO FACE;

21 (b) THE FEASIBILITY OF A POLICY OR PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES
22 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR VETERINARY CARE TO INCOME-QUALIFIED PET
23 OWNERS IN COLORADO;

24 (c) THE IMPACTS THAT A POLICY OR PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES
25 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR VETERINARY CARE TO INCOME-QUALIFIED PET
26 OWNERS IN COLORADO WOULD HAVE ON VETERINARY HOSPITALS,
27 VETERINARY OFFICES, LICENSED VETERINARIANS, AND OTHER VETERINARY

1 PERSONNEL;

2 (d) THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING A POLICY OR
3 PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR VETERINARY CARE
4 TO INCOME-QUALIFIED PET OWNERS IN COLORADO;

5 (e) WHETHER ELIGIBILITY FOR ANY POLICY OR PROGRAM THAT
6 PROVIDES FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR VETERINARY CARE TO
7 INCOME-QUALIFIED PET OWNERS IN COLORADO SHOULD BE TIED TO
8 MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY;

9 (f) WHETHER ESTABLISHING AN ENTERPRISE WOULD BE
10 BENEFICIAL IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR
11 VETERINARY CARE TO INCOME-QUALIFIED PET OWNERS IN COLORADO; AND

12 (g) ANY EXISTING STATE OR FEDERAL POLICIES, PROGRAMS, OR
13 FUNDING SOURCES THAT COULD BE ACCESSED OR EXPANDED TO PROVIDE
14 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR VETERINARY CARE TO INCOME-QUALIFIED PET
15 OWNERS IN COLORADO.

16 (4) **Additional duties of the advisory group - report.**

17 (a) (I) THE COMMISSIONER, OR THE MEMBER OF THE ADVISORY GROUP
18 WHO IS APPOINTED TO REPRESENT THE DIVISION PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION
19 (2)(b) OF THIS SECTION, SHALL CALL THE FIRST MEETING OF THE ADVISORY
20 GROUP.

21 (II) THE ADVISORY GROUP SHALL HOLD ITS FIRST MEETING ON OR
22 BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2025.

23 (III) THE ADVISORY GROUP SHALL MEET AT LEAST FOUR TIMES,
24 WHICH MEETINGS MUST BE HELD VIRTUALLY AND ALLOW FOR
25 ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION BY MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY GROUP
26 AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

27 (IV) THE ADVISORY GROUP MAY HOLD ADDITIONAL MEETINGS AS

1 DEEMED NECESSARY BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION AFTER
2 CONSULTATION WITH MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY GROUP.

3 (V) ALL MEETINGS OF THE ADVISORY GROUP MUST BE OPEN TO THE
4 PUBLIC, AND THE ADVISORY GROUP SHALL POST NOTICE OF A MEETING AT
5 LEAST FORTY-EIGHT HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING ON THE
6 DIVISION'S PUBLIC WEBSITE.

7 (VI) THE ADVISORY GROUP SHALL POST MEETING SUMMARIES, ANY
8 DRAFT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS, AND THE REPORT PREPARED
9 PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (4)(b) OF THIS SECTION ON THE DIVISION'S
10 PUBLIC WEBSITE.

11 (b) ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1, 2026, THE ADVISORY GROUP
12 SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE, WATER, AND
13 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE; THE SENATE AGRICULTURE AND
14 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE; AND THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE THAT
15 SUMMARIZES THE ADVISORY GROUP'S FINDINGS AND POLICY
16 RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE ISSUES OF STUDY DESCRIBED IN
17 SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION.

18 (c) THE ADVISORY GROUP MAY SOLICIT AND SEEK INPUT AND
19 PARTICIPATION FROM RELEVANT COMMUNITIES AND STAKEHOLDERS IN
20 CONDUCTING THE ADVISORY GROUP'S MEETINGS AND COMPILING THE
21 REPORT OF THE ADVISORY GROUP.

22 (5) **Staff support.** THE DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION MAY SUPPLY
23 STAFF ASSISTANCE TO THE ADVISORY GROUP AS THE DIRECTOR DEEMS
24 APPROPRIATE, SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE APPROPRIATIONS.

25 (6) **Repeal.** THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1,
26 2027.

27 **SECTION 2. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act

1 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the
2 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except
3 that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V
4 of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this
5 act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take
6 effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in
7 November 2026 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
8 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.