

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to lost or stray dogs or cats;  
 3           creating s. 823.151, F.S.; providing legislative  
 4           findings; requiring that specified entities that take  
 5           receivership of lost or stray dogs or cats shall adopt  
 6           written policies and procedures to ensure that every  
 7           reasonable effort is made to quickly and reliably  
 8           return owned animals to their owners; providing  
 9           requirements for such policies and procedures;  
 10          requiring that specified records be available to the  
 11          public; providing an effective date.

12  
 13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 15           Section 1. Section 823.151, Florida Statutes, is created to  
 16          read:

17           823.151 Lost or stray dogs and cats.-

18           (1) The Legislature finds that natural disasters, such as  
 19          hurricanes, may result in an increase in owned dogs and cats  
 20          becoming lost or stray. The Legislature further finds that dog  
 21          and cat owners statewide should be afforded the opportunity to  
 22          quickly and reliably claim their lost pets. It is therefore  
 23          declared to be the public policy of the state that animal  
 24          control agencies and humane organizations shall adopt policies  
 25          and procedures to help return lost cats or dogs to identified

26 owners.

27 (2) (a) A public or private animal shelter, humane  
28 organization, or animal control agency operated by a humane  
29 organization or by a county, municipality, or other incorporated  
30 political subdivision that takes receivership of any lost or  
31 stray dogs or cats shall adopt written policies and procedures  
32 to ensure that every reasonable effort is made to quickly and  
33 reliably return owned animals to their owners. Such policies and  
34 procedures shall include:

35 1. Upon intake, screening of lost or stray dogs and cats  
36 for identification, including tags, licenses, implanted  
37 microchips, and tattoos.

38 2. A process for matching received lost or stray dogs and  
39 cats with any reports of lost pets received by the shelter from  
40 owners.

41 3. Public notice of lost or stray dogs and cats received,  
42 provided at the shelter or on the Internet, as appropriate,  
43 within 48 hours of the animal's admission.

44 4. Reasonable efforts to notify identified owners of lost  
45 or stray dogs and cats within 48 hours of identification. Such  
46 reasonable efforts may include, but are not limited to, attempts  
47 to contact identified owners by telephone, by electronic mail,  
48 by United States mail, or by personal service at the owner's  
49 last known phone number and address.

50 5. Notice to the public of the shelter's location, hours,

51 fees, and the return-to-owner process posted on the Internet,  
52 with the shelter's business hours posted outside the shelter  
53 facility and recorded on the shelter's telephone answering  
54 system message.

55 6. Access for owners to retrieve dogs and cats at least  
56 one weekend day per week and after 5:00 p.m. one weekday per  
57 week, provided that complying with the requirements of this  
58 subparagraph shall not require an increase in total operating  
59 hours.

60 7. Direct return-to-owner protocols that allow animal  
61 control officers in the field to directly return lost or stray  
62 dogs and cats to their owners when the owners have been  
63 identified.

64 8. Procedural safeguards to minimize the euthanasia of  
65 owned dogs and cats. Such safeguards shall include, but are not  
66 limited to, record verification to ensure that each animal to be  
67 euthanized is the correct animal designated for the procedure  
68 and proper scanning for an implanted microchip using a universal  
69 scanner immediately prior to the procedure.

70 9. Temporary extension of local minimum stray hold periods  
71 after a disaster is declared by the President of the United  
72 States or a state of emergency is declared by the Governor, if  
73 deemed necessary by a local government in the area of the  
74 declaration.

75 (b) Records related to this section and maintained by a

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76 | public or private animal shelter, humane organization, or animal  
77 | control agency operated by a humane society or by a county,  
78 | municipality, or other incorporated political subdivision must  
79 | be made available to the public pursuant to chapter 119.

80 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.