



House Office Building, 9 South  
Lansing, Michigan 48909  
Phone: 517/373-6466

## REGULATE WOLF HYBRIDS

Senate Bill 705 (Substitute H-2)  
Addendum to SFA analysis (4-12-00)

Sponsor: Sen. Leon Stille  
Senate Committee: Farming, Agribusiness  
and Food Systems  
House Committee: Health Policy

### ADDENDUM TO SENATE FISCAL AGENCY ANALYSIS OF SB 705 DATED 12-17-99:

#### *HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION:*

The Committee on Health Policy adopted a substitute bill which, among other things, would use the term “wolf hybrid” instead of “wolf-dog cross”, and most provisions would also apply to a person who was temporarily in possession of a wolf hybrid (e.g., someone providing dog sitting services). Specifically, the committee substitute differs from the Senate-passed bill in the following ways:

- A person could not sell, offer for sale, or advertise a dog for sale by falsely representing the dog to be a wolf hybrid. Further, it would be a rebuttable presumption that a dog was a wolf hybrid if the current or previous owner represented it to be one. A representation could be by advertisement, registration paper, or any other method.

- The owner of a wolf hybrid would have to apply for a permit within four months of the bill’s effective date.

- An owner or person temporarily in possession of a wolf hybrid would be liable for damages if the animal bit an individual without provocation. Further, the bill would specify that it would not limit the common law liability of an owner or person in possession of a wolf hybrid for any death or injury of a human or property damage caused by the animal.

- A wolf hybrid subject to forfeiture due to violations of the bill’s requirements by the owner could not be seized without due process.

- The Senate-passed version contained a list of morphological traits to be used in identifying a wolf hybrid. The House substitute removed this provision.

- If a law enforcement officer believed that an animal were a wolf hybrid, but the owner was unable or unwilling to verify that the animal was a wolf hybrid, the officer would have to consult with an expert on wolf hybrid identification before enforcing the bill. An “expert on wolf hybrid identification” would be defined as an individual with a combination of at least ten years of training and field experience in wolf and wolf hybrid behavioral and morphological characteristics, and who

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was recognized as an expert at the state and national levels by others in the same field. In making an identification, an expert would have to consider all relevant aspects of identification (such as behavioral characteristics), morphological traits (including gait), and any necropsy (animal autopsy) results.

- In the case of a possible rabies exposure involving a human, livestock, or a person's pet, a wolf hybrid could be quarantined for ten days from the date of the exposure if the owner provided a valid rabies vaccination certificate from a veterinarian that showed that the animal had been vaccinated at least 30 days before the exposure. If the wolf hybrid died or exhibited any symptoms of rabies during the quarantine period, the animal would have to be euthanized and examined for rabies according to provisions in the Public Health Code. (Note: Currently, there is no USDA approved rabies vaccine for use in wolf hybrids.)

- The bill requires a local unit of government to verify certain information before issuing a permit to own a wolf hybrid. The House substitute would add that an applicant for a wolf hybrid permit would have to be knowledgeable about a wolf hybrid's disposition and care requirements. The owner of a wolf hybrid would have to maintain copies of the animal's veterinary records and present the records upon request of a law enforcement officer.

- The Senate-passed version allows a law enforcement officer or other person to kill a wolf hybrid if the animal were attacking or chasing a person or livestock, poultry, or a mammalian pet. The House substitute instead would allow the wolf hybrid to be killed if it were attacking, injuring, or killing a human, livestock, or poultry. In addition, the bill would specify that a law enforcement officer could kill a wolf hybrid if the animal were attacking, injuring, or killing wildlife. Further, a person with a permit to own a wolf hybrid could recover the value of the animal if another person or a law enforcement officer illegally killed the animal.

- Certain provisions of the bill would not pertain to a nonresident who was transporting his or her wolf hybrid through the state en route to a location outside of the state.

- If a wolf hybrid were leashed while exercising, the leash length could not exceed six feet. A wolf hybrid could be exercised outdoors in a fenced area with permission of the property owner if the owner or a person who was temporarily caring for the animal were present.

- The House substitute rewrites certain provisions pertaining to the care and feeding of wolf hybrids to provide clarity and to be less burdensome. When an animal died, only the death, and not the "cause of death", would have to be certified in writing.

- The Senate-passed bill requires wolf hybrids to be kept in a facility with a floor space of at least 900 square feet, plus an additional 450 square feet for each additional animal. The House substitute would allow a permitting agency to grant a variance if the requirement would impose a practical difficulty for the owner and the reduced floor area was sufficient to maintain the animal in good health.

- The owner of a wolf hybrid would have to ensure that it received an annual checkup, including any vaccinations, and other necessary medical care.

***POSITIONS:***

The Michigan Veterinary Medical Association supports the bill. (4-10-00)

The Humane Society of the United States supports the bill. (4-10-00)

The Michigan Humane Society supports the bill. (4-10-00)

The Michigan Association of Animal Control Officers supports the bill. (4-11-00)

The Department of Agriculture supports the concept of the bill. (4-11-00)

The Michigan Hunting Dog Federation opposes the bill. (4-10-00)

The Michigan Association of Pure Bred Dogs opposes the bill. (4-10-00)

The Professional Kennel Club, Inc. opposes the bill. (10-29-99)

The American Kennel Club opposes the bill. (4-11-00)

Analyst: S. Stutzky

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.