

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1185**

Introduced by

Representatives Price, Rose

Senators DeMers, Kilzer, Thane

(At the request of the State Department of Health)

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact chapter 23-36 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating  
2 to rabies control; to repeal sections 23-01-18 and 23-01-19 of the North Dakota Century Code,  
3 relating to rabies control; to provide a penalty; and to declare an emergency.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 23-36 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted  
6 as follows:

7 **23-36-01. Definitions.** As used in this chapter:

- 8 1. "Bite" means any penetration of the skin by an animal's teeth.
- 9 2. "Clinical symptoms of rabies" means physical signs or symptoms, or animal  
10 behavior that would lead a reasonably prudent veterinarian to conclude that a  
11 diagnosis of possible rabies is indicated.
- 12 3. "Confinement" means separation of an animal from humans, other than the owner,  
13 caretaker, a member of the owner's family, or the caretaker's employees, and from  
14 other animals, by means of a building, cage, fence, pen, or other secure enclosure  
15 that restricts the animal's movement within definite boundaries and prevents the  
16 animal from exiting the enclosure.
- 17 4. "Department" means the state department of health.
- 18 5. "Domestic animal" means any dog [canis familiaris], cat [felis domestica], horse,  
19 mule, bovine animal, sheep, goat, bison, llama, alpaca, swine, or captive-bred,  
20 currently vaccinated ferret.
- 21 6. "Exposure to rabies" means any bite or scratch, and includes any nonbite contact  
22 of an individual with an animal, animal tissue, or fluids that are defined as an  
23 exposure to rabies by the federal advisory committee on immunization practices  
24 referred to in Public Law No. 103-66 [107 Stat. 636, 642; 42 U.S.C. 1396s(e)].

- 1           7. "Impound" means quarantining an animal at a public pound or an animal facility of  
2           a licensed veterinarian.
- 3           8. "Law enforcement officer" has the meaning of that term as set forth in section  
4           12.1-01-04.
- 5           9. "Quarantine" means confinement in a fixed area inspected and approved by a  
6           game warden, the state veterinarian, a department or local public health employee,  
7           or a law enforcement officer that keeps a possibly rabid animal secure and isolated  
8           from all other animals so there is no possibility of rabies being mechanically  
9           transmitted from the confined area.
- 10          10. "Wild mammal" means any animal of the order mammalia which is not a domestic  
11          animal and includes any hybrid of a domestic animal and a mammal regardless of  
12          whether the animal is:
- 13           a. Wildlife as defined in section 20.1-01-02; or  
14           b. Held in private ownership.

15          **23-36-02. Policy - Local authority.**

- 16          1. The department shall establish a rabies control program that must place primary  
17          emphasis on human exposure to rabies.
- 18          2. The department shall consider national peer-reviewed recommendations for the  
19          control of rabies during the development of the department's rabies control  
20          program.
- 21          3. This chapter may not be construed to limit the authority of any local agency to  
22          control or prevent rabies, and, upon request, the department may assist any local  
23          agency in rabies control and prevention activities, but the fact that possible rabies  
24          exposure is subject to a local ordinance does not limit the department's authority  
25          under this chapter.
- 26          4. This chapter may not be construed to limit a law enforcement officer's ability to  
27          immediately seize, humanely kill, and request the testing of an animal for rabies if  
28          emergency circumstances exist that endanger human health or safety.

29          **23-36-03. Enforcement authority.**

- 30          1. The department, or an agency acting on the department's behalf, may promptly  
31          seize and humanely kill, impound at the owner's expense, or quarantine any

1 animal if the state health officer, or the state health officer's designee, has probable  
2 cause to believe the animal presents clinical symptoms of rabies.

3 2. The department, or an agency acting on the department's behalf, may promptly  
4 seize and humanely kill, impound at the owner's expense, or quarantine any wild  
5 mammal that is not currently vaccinated for rabies by a vaccine approved for use  
6 on that species by the national association of state public health veterinarians, inc.,  
7 or any stray or unwanted domestic animal, if the state health officer, or the state  
8 health officer's designee, determines the animal is a threat to human life or safety  
9 due to the possible exposure of an individual to rabies.

10 3. The department, or an agency acting on the department's behalf, may promptly  
11 seize and quarantine, or impound at the owner's expense, any dog, cat, or  
12 currently vaccinated ferret for a period of ten days, or any other domestic animal  
13 for a period not exceeding six months, if the state health officer, or the state health  
14 officer's designee, determines the animal is a threat to human life or safety due to  
15 the possible exposure of an individual to rabies.

16 4. If an animal is humanely killed under this section, then at the request of the state  
17 health officer, or the state health officer's designee, the animal's brain must be  
18 tested for rabies by the state microbiology laboratory of the department if there is  
19 possible human exposure to rabies and by the North Dakota veterinary diagnostic  
20 laboratory in any other case.

21 5. If an animal that has bitten or otherwise exposed an individual or another animal is  
22 not seized for testing, a law enforcement officer with jurisdiction over the place  
23 where the animal is located may determine whether to impound or quarantine the  
24 animal under subsection 3 and which method of confinement to use.

25 6. A licensed veterinarian shall examine, at the owner's expense, a confined animal  
26 on the first and last day of the animal's confinement and, at the request of the  
27 department or a local public health unit, at any other time during confinement.

28 **23-36-04. Administrative search warrant.** Except in the case of an emergency, the  
29 department, or another state or local agency acting on the department's behalf, may seize an  
30 animal located on private property only as authorized by an administrative search warrant

1 issued under chapter 29-29.1. A warrant to seize an animal under this section must include a  
2 request to quarantine, impound, or humanely kill and test the animal.

3 **23-36-05. Assistance of state and local agencies.** Upon request of the department,  
4 the game and fish department, the state veterinarian, the department of agriculture, any county  
5 sheriff's office, or any city police department shall provide assistance to the department in any  
6 action to seize, impound, quarantine, or test an animal suspected of having rabies or that has  
7 possibly exposed an individual to rabies, and shall carry out any other preventive measures the  
8 department requests. For purposes of this section, a request from the department means only  
9 a request for assistance as to a particular and singular suspicion of exposure to rabies and  
10 does not constitute a continuous request for assistance.

11 **23-36-06. Payment for postexposure treatment.** The department may provide, at no  
12 cost, rabies postexposure vaccine to an individual possibly exposed to rabies if the department  
13 determines the individual is financially unable to pay for the postexposure vaccine treatment.

14 **23-36-07. Penalty for violation of order or interference.** A person is guilty of an  
15 infraction if the person:

- 16 1. Conceals, releases, or removes an animal from the place where the animal is  
17 located with intent to impair that animal's availability for seizure under that warrant  
18 or order while the person is under the belief that a search warrant or judicial order  
19 is pending or is about to be issued for the seizure of an animal;
- 20 2. Fails to impound or quarantine an animal for the period and at the place specified  
21 after having been ordered to impound or quarantine the animal; or
- 22 3. Recklessly hinders any state or local official in any pending or prospective action to  
23 seize, impound, quarantine, or test an animal under this chapter.

24 **23-36-08. Limitation on liability.** Subject to any other requirements of section  
25 32-12.2-02, the owner of an animal may bring a claim for money damages, and may recover an  
26 amount up to the replacement value of the animal, if the owner establishes that before the  
27 animal was seized and tested for rabies under this chapter, the state health officer, or the state  
28 health officer's designee, knew or recklessly failed to determine that the animal, at the time of  
29 the exposure, was lawfully owned and licensed and that:

- 1           1.    The animal was a wild mammal, and, at the time of the exposure, was currently
- 2                    vaccinated with a vaccine approved for use on an animal of that species by the
- 3                    national association of state public health veterinarians, inc.;
- 4           2.    The animal had not bitten, scratched, or otherwise possibly exposed a person to
- 5                    rabies; or
- 6           3.    The animal was a domestic animal and there was not probable cause to believe
- 7                    the animal was rabid.

8           **23-36-09. Owner's responsibility.**

- 9           1.    The owner of an animal is liable for the cost of quarantine and veterinary services,
- 10                   and for the cost of any postexposure treatment received by an individual who is
- 11                   possibly exposed to rabies by the owner's animal, if the animal is not:
- 12                   a.    Licensed or registered as required by any state or local law or rule applicable
- 13                   to that species; or
- 14                   b.    Confined or vaccinated as required by any state or local law or rule applicable
- 15                   to that species.
- 16           2.    This section may not be construed to limit any other liability of an animal owner for
- 17                   injury or damage caused by the owner's animal.

18           **SECTION 2. REPEAL.** Sections 23-01-18 and 23-01-19 of the 1997 Supplement to the  
19 North Dakota Century Code are repealed.

20           **SECTION 3. EMERGENCY.** This Act is declared to be an emergency measure.