

**REPORT OF THE  
STATE VETERINARIAN OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES**

# **Progress Report on the Establishment of the Commonwealth of Virginia's Dangerous Dog Registry**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



## **HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 54**

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
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## **Introduction**

The 2006 General Assembly amended and reenacted § 3.1-796.93:1 of the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered § 3.1-796.93:3, and repealed § 3.1-796.117 related to the control of dangerous and vicious dogs; penalties. The legislation also directed the establishment of a Virginia Dangerous Dog Registry, to be maintained by the State Veterinarian. This document is submitted in response to the General Assembly's request for a report on progress in development of the Commonwealth of Virginia's Dangerous Dog Registry on or before November 1, 2006.

## **Actions to Date**

On June 9, 2006 the State Veterinarian sent a questionnaire to 133 jurisdictions in the Commonwealth of Virginia to gather information about existing Dangerous Dog Registries and numbers of dangerous dogs registered throughout the Commonwealth. The 89 jurisdictions that responded to the survey reported a total of 292 dangerous dogs.

Staff met with Virginia Interactive, which is a part of the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA), on August 29, 2006 to discuss development of a preliminary proposal for the on-line Dangerous Dog Registry. Representatives from Virginia Interactive were provided with copies of the 2006 Dangerous Dog legislation, an outline of the legislation containing the data fields required for the registry, and a procedural flow chart describing the flow of information and responsibilities once a dangerous dog incident occurs. Virginia Interactive agreed to develop a primary proposal for the on-line Dangerous Dog Registry that will encompass the entry and administration of information to include only the necessary fields and database definitions based on the requirements of the legislation. A second option to the primary proposal will include a graphic display for geographically locating dangerous dogs using Mapquest mapping service. Virginia Interactive agreed to provide the estimated cost for development and management of the database and a development cycle (number of months required). Virginia Interactive is expected to report its progress to VDACS by late October 2006.

The State Veterinarian communicated with the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) with regard to interpretation of the statute. The OAG advised that the State Veterinarian may receive information in an electronic format. However, the State Veterinarian must enter the data and maintain the database. The OAG suggested using the Commonwealth's Sex Offender Registry as a guideline. The OAG also suggested having the local animal control officer or a state official be a "clearinghouse" for all information (both initial and renewal) on dangerous dogs consistent with the provisions of § 3.1-796.93:3.

The OAG has stated that parts of the legislation may require promulgation of regulations to clarify the requirements of the legislation.

The State Veterinarian has developed preliminary business plans until the on-line registry is established to receive and maintain registry information on dogs declared dangerous in the Commonwealth of Virginia since July 1, 2006. Owners of dangerous dogs and officials of local jurisdictions (animal control officers) will submit all dangerous dog registry information required by the dangerous dog legislation to the State Veterinarian's Office. The State Veterinarian will receive and maintain all dangerous dog registry information in paper format (paper files) until the establishment of the on-line registry.

The State Veterinarian plans to hire an administrative assistant to manage the Dangerous Dog Registry. Recruitment for this position closed on Friday, September 15, 2006. A selection panel will be convened in mid October to fill the position.

### **Summary**

Pursuant to the General Assembly's request that the Commissioner submit a progress report on the establishment of a Dangerous Dog Registry, a timeline has been established to ensure the registry will be operational within the mandated timeframe. Meetings and consultations have been conducted, involving the Office of the Attorney General, Virginia Interactive, and Agency staff. VDACS expects to have the Commonwealth of Virginia's Dangerous Dog Registry operational on or before July 1, 2007.



