

Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

SFA



BILL ANALYSIS

Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986
TDD: (517) 373-0543

Senate Bill 782 (as enrolled)
Sponsor: Senator Bill Bullard, Jr.
Senate Committee: Farming, Agribusiness and Food Systems
House Committee: Health Policy

PUBLIC ACT 274 of 2000

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RATIONALE

Apparently, there has been a growing interest in the ownership of large carnivores such as wild cats and bears, because some people are fascinated with the uniqueness of the animals or seek them as status pets, while others are attracted by the financial gain of selling the offspring.

The practice of breeding and owning large wild cats and bears as pets has raised a number of public health and safety concerns. Reportedly, most wild cats and bears are poorly adapted to be pets and there have been several injurious attacks and costly searches after escape. According to the Michigan Humane Society, large wild cats and bears often are neglected, or are abandoned or released by their owners when they become difficult to handle. Even if the animals are cared for properly, they can be dangerous to possess because wild animals often exhibit unpredictable predatory and territorial behavior.

Some people believe that since large wild cats and bears can pose a serious risk of danger to the public, their future possession should be prohibited, handling and care should be regulated, standards for keeping these wild animals should be imposed, and owners' responsibilities in instances of attacks should be clearly specified.

CONTENT

The bill created the "Large Carnivore Act" to do the following:

- Prohibit a person from possessing a large carnivore unless the person possessed the animal when the bill took effect and obtains a permit for the animal.
- Require the payment of an annual permit fee.
- Require an owner to have an identification number placed on the animal.
- Prohibit a large carnivore from being tethered outside on a leash or chain or being allowed

- to run at-large, and require a large carnivore to be kept in a facility, as described in the bill, to prevent escape and injury.
- Permit an owner to keep an animal at his or her residence, under certain conditions, including supervision by a person who is at least 21 years of age.
- Require an owner to post signs on the property where a large carnivore is being kept.
- Specify the physical conditions under which a large carnivore must be housed.
- Permit a law enforcement officer to inspect a facility where a large carnivore is kept.
- Establish requirements for the transportation of a large carnivore.
- Require the reporting of the potential exposure to rabies by a large carnivore as the result of a bite, scratch or abrasion, and require the large carnivore to be euthanized under certain circumstances.
- Establish misdemeanor penalties for violations of the bill, and permit the seizure of a large carnivore under certain circumstances.
- Permit a local unit to adopt an ordinance that is more restrictive than the bill.
- Exempt certain animal protection shelters, zoological parks, veterinarians, circuses, and certain businesses involving the presentation of large carnivores from the bill's provisions.

The bill defines "large carnivore" as any of the following cats of the Felidae family, whether wild or captive bred, including a hybrid cross with such a cat: a lion, a leopard (including a snow leopard or clouded leopard), a jaguar, a tiger, a cougar, a panther, or a cheetah; or a bear of a species that is native or nonnative to this State, whether wild or captive bred.

The following is a more detailed description of the bill.

Prohibitions

A person may not own or possess a large carnivore except in compliance with the bill; transfer or receive a large carnivore with or without remuneration; or breed a large carnivore. ("Person" means an individual, partnership, corporation, association, governmental entity, or other legal entity.)

Permits

A person may not possess one or more large carnivores unless the person owns the large carnivores, possessed them on the bill's effective date, applied for a permit for the animals within 90 days after the bill took effect, and obtains a permit for them. The permit applies only to the individual large carnivores, is not transferable to another person except through testate or intestate succession (inheritance with or without a will), and is valid in any local unit in which possession of the large carnivores is not prohibited by ordinance.

A person must file a permit application with the person specified by the first of the following that applies:

- The city or village agency to which an animal control officer is assigned, if the large carnivores are kept in a city or village and it employs an animal control officer.
- The township agency to which an animal control officer is assigned, if the large carnivores are kept in a township and it employs an animal control officer.
- The county agency to which an animal control officer is assigned, if the county in which the large carnivores are kept employs an animal control officer.
- The sheriff of the county where the animals are kept, if none of the above applies.

The applicant must include with the application an annual permit fee, which must be established by the governing body of the local unit whose agency issues the permit. The fee may not be less than the greater of the following:

- \$25 or, at the option of the local unit if the applicant keeps more than one large carnivore in that local unit, \$25 for each large carnivore.
- An amount necessary to cover the local unit's actual, reasonable costs of enforcing the bill.

The permit application also must include a written statement that specifies the number of large carnivores that the applicant owns; describes in detail each large carnivore owned by the applicant, including its identification number; specifies the name, address, and telephone number of the person

from whom the owner obtained the large carnivore, if known; and gives the name and address of the veterinarian who is expected to provide veterinary care to the animal.

A local unit may not issue a permit unless it finds that the above requirements are met, and that the applicant is at least 21 years of age, has not been convicted of or found responsible for violating a local ordinance or State law prohibiting neglect or mistreatment of an animal, has not within the past 10 years been convicted of a felony, and is not subject to a court order requiring the forfeiture of a large carnivore or prohibiting the ownership or possession of a large carnivore. In addition, the local unit must find that the facility and the conditions in which each large carnivore will be kept comply with the bill.

A permit must include all of the following: the name and address of the permit holder and the address where each large carnivore will be kept, if different from that of the permit holder; the number of large carnivores owned by the permit holder; the identification number of each large carnivore; the name and address of the veterinarian who is expected to provide veterinary care to the large carnivore; and any other reasonable information as determined by the local unit. This information may include, but is not limited to, a designation of permits required by a local unit, the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA), the Department of Community Health, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, or the Fish and Wildlife Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior. A local unit that issues a permit must notify the MDA of the name and address of the permit holder and the number of large carnivores owned by the permit holder.

A large carnivore owner annually must pay the local unit the annual permit fee.

A large carnivore owner must have an identification number placed on the animal by way of subcutaneous microchip, at the owner's expense, by or under the supervision of a veterinarian.

Control of Large Carnivore

A large carnivore may not be tethered outdoors, such as on a leash or chain, or allowed to run at-large. Except as otherwise provided, the animal must be kept constantly in a facility that is sufficiently secure to prevent the animal's escape and protect the animal from injury; is constructed of cement blocks, bricks, concrete, chain link fence, wires, or bars of suitable thickness, gauge, or diameter to prevent the animal's escape and to protect the animal from injury; and is well braced and securely anchored at ground level or, if the facility is located in a residence

or other building, at floor level and uses metal clamps, ties, or braces, of a strength sufficient for cage construction for that species of large carnivore. The facility also must be enclosed within a secondary fence that is located at least three feet outside of the facility's walls and is adequate to prevent a human from coming into contact with the large carnivore; has an entrance with a lock that is kept locked at all times when the animal is kept in the facility; and, has a floor area that meets or exceeds the minimum standards for housing as prescribed under the Federal Animal Welfare Act and regulations promulgated under it. ("Facility" means an indoor or outdoor cage, pen, or similar enclosure where a large carnivore is kept.)

The owner may, on a permanent or temporary basis, keep the animal in his or her residence and not in a facility, if the animal is under the supervision of a person who is at least 21 years of age. The owner may take the animal outdoors if the owner holds the animal under control on a secure leash that is up to six feet long; the animal is within a securely fenced area; and, the animal is being moved between any two of the following: the large carnivore's facility, the owner's residence, a shift cage, a vehicle, pursuant to the bill, or a veterinarian's office or veterinary hospital.

Owner Requirements

The owner of a large carnivore must present a permit for the animal upon the request of a law enforcement officer, and may not place the animal under the supervision of a person who is less than 21 years of age. The owner may not mistreat or neglect the large carnivore or allow it to be mistreated or neglected.

An owner must post and maintain signs on property where a large carnivore is kept stating: "A potentially dangerous large carnivore is kept on this property." Each sign must use block letters at least one-half inch high. A sign must be posted at each fence gate providing access to a residence on the property, providing access to a building in which the large carnivore's facility is located, or providing access to the facility. In addition, a sign must be posted on the outside of each door providing access to a residence on the property or providing access to any building in which the animal's facility is located, and on each side of the animal's facility, unless it is located in a residence or other building.

The conditions in which the animal is kept must be safe and conducive to the animal's physical health and comfort, and must promote normal behavior. The conditions include temperature, ventilation, humidity, drainage, sanitation, diet, and exercise. Potable drinking water must be provided at least

twice daily in a clean, accessible container, unless otherwise directed by a veterinarian. Swimming or wading pools must be cleaned as needed to ensure sufficiently sanitary water quality, and adequate drainage of surface water from the facility must be provided. Food must be nutritious, sufficient to maintain or restore health and normal body weight, and not spoiled or contaminated with insects, fecal material, or any other substance that may cause the food to be unpalatable, that may decrease its nutrient value, or that may pose a health risk to the large carnivore. Fecal and food wastes must be removed from the facility daily and stored or disposed of in a manner that prevents noxious odors, insect pests, or risks to human or animal health or the environment. Hard floors must be scrubbed and disinfected weekly. Large facilities with dirt floors must be raked every day and the raked waste removed daily. A large carnivore may be kept in a shift cage while the animal's facility is being cleaned. The shift cage must be appropriate in size for the animal and of an adequate construction to contain the animal safely.

At the owner's expense, the large carnivore must receive an annual checkup including scheduled vaccinations and other necessary medical care from a veterinarian. The owner must maintain the animal's veterinary records and present them when requested by a law enforcement officer. When the large carnivore dies, the owner must arrange to have the death certified in writing by a veterinarian, law enforcement officer, or the permitting agency, which must submit the certification to the MDA within 20 business days after the animal's death.

Transporting a Large Carnivore

A person transporting a large carnivore in a vehicle must comply with the standards in "International Air Transport Ass'n., Live Animal Regulations (26th ed., 1999)" applicable to the large carnivore species. In addition, a person transporting a large carnivore must comply with the requirements described below.

The large carnivore must be caged individually and securely, even while inside a passenger vehicle or in the bed of a truck; however, a female large carnivore and each of her unweaned offspring, if any, must be transported in the same cage. The vehicle must provide fresh air without injurious drafts and provide adequate protection from the elements to the animal. The animal's cargo area must be as free as possible of engine exhaust fumes. Fecal and food wastes must be removed from the animal's transport cage at least daily. The temperature within the cage must not be harmful to the animal's health. The cage must be large enough to ensure that the animal has sufficient space to stand erect, turn around, and lie naturally. The animal must not be placed in a cage

over or next to another animal unless each enclosure has a fitted floor or lateral partition that prevents excreta from entering lower or adjacent enclosures. The large carnivore must be given potable water at least twice daily and fed at least once daily, unless otherwise directed by a veterinarian.

Rabies Exposure, Vaccination

If a large carnivore potentially exposes a human to rabies by any penetration of the skin by teeth, any scratch or abrasion that causes penetration of the skin, or contamination of open wounds or mucous membranes with saliva or other infectious material, the large carnivore's owner must report the potential exposure to the local health department within 24 hours. If a large carnivore potentially exposes livestock or a mammalian pet to rabies by a means described above, the large carnivore's owner must report the potential exposure to the permitting agency within 24 hours. In either case, the large carnivore must be euthanized humanely by a veterinarian. The animal also must be examined immediately for rabies in the manner provided by rules promulgated under the Public Health Code.

Liability

A large carnivore's entry onto a field or enclosure that is owned or leased by a livestock or poultry producer constitutes a trespass, and the large carnivore's owner is liable in damages.

The owner of a large carnivore is liable in a civil action for the death or injury of a human and for property damage, including the death or injury of another animal, caused by the large carnivore. The bill states that it does not limit the common law liability of the owner for the death or injury of a human or for property damage caused by the large carnivore.

If a large carnivore escapes or is released, intentionally or unintentionally, the owner immediately must report the loss, escape, or release to a law enforcement officer of the local unit where the escape or release occurred. The owner is liable for all expenses associated with efforts to recapture the large carnivore. The owner may bring against a person who is responsible in whole or part for the escape or release of the animal a civil action for damages, including damages and expenses under these provisions.

Inspections and Violations

The facility where a large carnivore is kept is subject to inspection at reasonable hours by a law enforcement officer to ensure compliance with the bill.

If there is probable cause to believe that the bill is being violated, a law enforcement officer must issue to the large carnivore's owner a notice of the violation (as described below); arrest the owner or seek a warrant for his or her arrest, as appropriate under the Code of Criminal Procedure, for a misdemeanor violation of the bill; or, file a sworn complaint for forfeiture of the animal.

A law enforcement officer may give notice of a violation in writing to the owner of a large carnivore, if there is probable cause to believe that the bill is being violated. The notice must identify the violation and include a copy of the bill. Within 30 days after the notice is delivered, the owner must transfer ownership and possession of the animal or correct the violation and notify the law enforcement authority of the action taken. If the violation was failure to obtain a permit and it was committed knowingly, within 14 days after the notice is delivered, the owner must transfer the animal and notify the law enforcement officer of the action taken.

A large carnivore transferred under these provisions must be transferred to an animal control shelter or animal protection shelter; a person licensed or approved by the DNR or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; a zoological park approved and accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association; or a person approved by the Association of Sanctuaries or the American Sanctuary Association. Notice that the animal was transferred must include evidence of the transfer satisfactory to the law enforcement officer.

Unless the large carnivore's owner notifies the law enforcement officer that the animal was transferred, the officer must conduct an inspection at a reasonable time at least 30 days after notice of the violation is delivered. When the second inspection is conducted, the animal owner must pay a \$25 inspection fee or actual, reasonable costs of the inspection, whichever is greater, to the law enforcement officer. If the officer finds that the owner has not complied with the bill, the officer must seek forfeiture of the animal, as provided under the bill.

Penalties/Forfeiture

A person who violates the bill is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of at least \$250 but not more than \$1,000, plus prosecution costs; or, if the person fails to obtain a permit for a large carnivore, by a fine of at least \$500 but not more than \$2,000, plus prosecution costs. In addition, the person may be punished by one or more of the following: imprisonment for up to 93 days; community service work for up to 500 hours; or the loss of privileges to own or possess any animal. These

provisions do not apply to a law enforcement officer, veterinarian, or permitting agency, with respect to the person's or agency's performance of duties under the bill.

If a person who owns or possesses a large carnivore violates the bill, the animal and any other large carnivore owned by that person are subject to civil forfeiture. In a criminal action for a violation, the prosecuting attorney may file a petition requesting that the court issue an order for civil forfeiture of all of the large carnivores owned by that person.

Any person may file with a court having jurisdiction a complaint alleging that a person is violating the bill and requesting the court to order the civil forfeiture of all of the large carnivores owned by that person.

A law enforcement officer must seize a large carnivore pursuant to a seizure order issued by a court having jurisdiction over the large carnivore, upon a showing of probable cause that the animal is subject to forfeiture under the bill.

A large carnivore subject to forfeiture may be seized without process under any of the following circumstances:

- The seizure is incident to a lawful arrest for a violation of the bill.
- The seizure is pursuant to a valid search warrant.
- The seizure is pursuant to an inspection under a valid administrative inspection warrant.
- There is probable cause to believe that the conditions under which the animal or another large carnivore owned by the same person is kept are directly or indirectly dangerous to human or animal health or safety.
- Exigent circumstances preclude obtaining a court order, and there is probable cause to believe that the bill has been violated.
- The large carnivore or any other large carnivore owned by the same person is the subject of a prior judgment in favor of the State in a forfeiture proceeding.

If a seizure is to be accomplished by capture, tranquilization or other humane methods must be used for the capture.

A large carnivore seized under the bill is not subject to any other action to recover personal property, but is considered to be in the custody of the seizing agency, subject only to the bill's provisions concerning return of a large carnivore, or to an order and judgment of the court having jurisdiction over the forfeiture proceedings. When a large carnivore is seized, the law enforcement authority may remove the animal to a place designated by the court.

Return of Large Carnivore

A large carnivore that belongs to the victim of a crime must be returned promptly to the victim, except in the following circumstances:

- When the crime victim last possessed the large carnivore, he or she was in violation of the bill's permitting provisions.
- Until the dispute is resolved, if the ownership of the animal is disputed.
- If the property is required to be retained as evidence pursuant to the Crime Victim's Rights Act.

A law enforcement officer may return a seized large carnivore to its owner if the law enforcement officer is satisfied that the conditions resulting in the seizure have been corrected. If the large carnivore was seized pursuant to process issued by a court, the law enforcement officer must obtain approval of the court before returning the animal.

Unless the animal has been returned, the law enforcement officer, within 10 days after the animal is seized, must give written notice of the seizure and intent to forfeit the animal to the large carnivore's owner and any person who was injured or whose

property was damaged by the animal. The notice must be delivered in person or sent by certified mail. If the name and address of the person are not reasonably ascertainable or personal delivery cannot be accomplished reasonably, the notice must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the large carnivore was seized for 10 successive publishing days. Proof of written notice or publication must be filed with the court having jurisdiction over the seizure or forfeiture.

Immediately after the seizure, the law enforcement officer must give the prosecuting attorney for the county in which the large carnivore was seized, or the Attorney General if he or she is actively handling a case involving or relating to the large carnivore, notice of the seizure of the animal and any intent to forfeit the animal under the bill.

The large carnivore owner may file a motion with the court having jurisdiction to return the large carnivore on the grounds that the animal was seized illegally or is not subject to forfeiture under the bill. The court must hear the motion within 30 days after it is filed. At the hearing on the motion, the Attorney General, or the attorney for the local unit in which the large carnivore was seized, must establish probable cause to believe that the animal is subject to forfeiture under the bill and, if the person filing the motion claims the large carnivore was seized illegally, that the animal was seized properly. If the Attorney General or the attorney for the local unit fails to sustain his or her burden of proof, the court must order the return of the large carnivore. The testimony of a person at a hearing held on the motion is not admissible against the individual in any criminal proceeding except in a criminal prosecution for perjury. The bill also specifies that the testimony does not waive the person's constitutional right against self-incrimination.

A law enforcement officer must return a seized large carnivore to its owner within seven days after the occurrence of any of the following: the failure to issue a warrant against the owner of the animal for committing a misdemeanor under the bill or to file a complaint under the bill within 10 days after the large carnivore is seized; the dismissal of charges against the large carnivore's owner or of a complaint under the bill, as applicable; the court's determination that an order for the large carnivore to be forfeited may not be entered; the acquittal of the large carnivore's owner of any charges under the bill; or entry of a court order for the return of the large carnivore.

If a large carnivore is returned, the law enforcement authority must give written notice of the return to the persons who received notice of the forfeiture. The notice must be delivered in person or sent by certified mail. If the name and address of a person are not reasonably ascertainable or personal delivery of the notice cannot be accomplished reasonably, the notice must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the large carnivore was seized for 10 successive publishing days.

Forfeiture Costs

If the court orders a large carnivore to be forfeited, the forfeiture order must direct that each large carnivore be transferred to a wildlife sanctuary approved by the Association of Sanctuaries, an animal protection shelter, or a zoo accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association, where the large carnivore will be cared for safely and humanely. Subject to the bill's provisions on a large carnivore's potentially exposing a human or other animals to rabies, if the large carnivore killed or injured a human being or animal, the forfeiture order may direct that the large carnivore be humanely euthanized by a veterinarian. A forfeiture order also must revoke any permit that may have been issued for the large carnivore under the bill and order payment of costs of placement and care. The bill specifies that the forfeiture is a civil forfeiture.

If a large carnivore is seized, the animal's owner is liable for the costs of placement and care for the animal from the time of seizure until the time of return or forfeiture and, if a large carnivore is ordered to be forfeited and euthanized, for the costs of humanely euthanizing and disposing of the animal. The bill specifies that this provision does not apply if the animal is returned.

Exemptions

The bill specifies that its provisions on possessing a large carnivore and obtaining a permit for the animal, placing an identification number on the animal, and

keeping a large carnivore in a facility, do not apply to the following: an animal control shelter or animal protection shelter, a zoological park approved or accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association, a person approved by the Association of Sanctuaries or the American Sanctuary Association, a law enforcement officer acting under the authority of the bill, a veterinarian temporarily in possession of a large carnivore to provide veterinary care for or humanely euthanize the animal, or a person licensed or approved by the DNR or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (except a person who possesses at least one black bear under the authority of a permit to hold wildlife in captivity issued by the DNR).

Further, the bill's provisions concerning large carnivore permits, identification numbers, facilities, exportation, and penalties for failure to obtain a large carnivore permit do not apply to a person who is not a Michigan resident and who is in the State only for the purpose of travel between locations outside of the State.

In addition, the bill does not apply to a person who meets all of the following requirements:

- Is conducting a for-profit or nonprofit business whose primary purpose is the presentation of animals including large carnivores to the public for education or exhibition purposes and that is not conducted in connection with another business as a means of attracting customers to that business.
- Is a Class C licensee who possesses and maintains a Class C license under Federal regulations. (A Class C licensee is a person whose business involves the showing or display of animals to the public.)
- Meets or exceeds all standards required of a Class C licensee, including training, housing, care, and transport of large carnivores.
- Does not allow a patron to come into direct contact with a large carnivore, or close enough contact with a large carnivore over 20 weeks of age so as to place the patron in jeopardy of being harmed by the large carnivore.
- Does not sell large carnivores, except to another person who meets these requirements.
- Does not breed large carnivores.

The bill also does not apply to a circus. (The bill defines "circus" as an incorporated, Class C licensee that is licensed under Federal regulations, that is temporarily in the State, and that offers skilled performances by live animals, clowns, and acrobats for public entertainment. "Circus" does not include a person, whether or not a Class C licensee, who presents a large carnivore to the public as part of a carnival or for exhibition; education; or entertainment that includes wrestling, a photography opportunity

with a patron, or an activity in which the large carnivore and a patron are in close contact with each other.)

Other Provisions

A person may not export or attempt to export a large carnivore to another state or country unless the animal's import and possession are lawful in the other state or country, and the destination and proposed new owner of the animal have been approved by the regulatory agency in the other state or country having authority to do so, if any.

A law enforcement officer or other person may kill a large carnivore if the person sees the animal chasing, attacking, injuring, or killing a human or livestock, poultry, or a mammalian pet. A person is not liable in damages or otherwise for killing or attempting to kill a large carnivore under these circumstances. In addition, a law enforcement officer may kill a large carnivore if the animal is chasing, attacking, injuring, or killing wildlife.

The bill states that it does not prohibit the owner of a large carnivore, for which a permit has been issued if required, from recovering by legal action against a law enforcement officer or other person the value of a large carnivore illegally killed by that officer or other person.

A local unit may adopt an ordinance governing large carnivores that is more restrictive than the bill. The bill also specifies that its requirements are in addition to any other requirements governing a large carnivore under State and Federal law.

The MDA must provide each pet shop, animal control shelter, and animal protection shelter with information on the bill's requirements.

MCL 287.1101-287.1123

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

It is inappropriate and inhumane for large carnivores, such as exotic cats and bears, to be possessed as domestic pets. These animals are essentially wild creatures and tend to exhibit unpredictable predatory and territorial behavior, sometimes resulting in fatal or serious injuries to people. The bill establishes Statewide regulations that will diminish the grave danger these animals pose to people and the community and provide proper safety precautions.

In addition, very few large carnivore owners are willing or able to provide the special care, feeding, proper exercise, and sanitary and adequate housing conditions the animals require. The bill affords greater protection to the animals by establishing minimum standards for their care, transportation, and housing-standards a person must comply with as a condition of acquiring and maintaining a large carnivore permit. These requirements should prevent the type of situation described in a *Detroit Free Press* article (12-9-97) that featured a recovery of three lion cubs seized from owners who had mistreated them. The animals were undernourished when found, crudely defanged, and so poorly declawed that their forepaws were permanently deformed.

Response: The legislation may be improved. For example, an owner should not be required to post signs on the property where a large carnivore is being kept. Although the signs warn those who might encounter the animals, they also provide notice to thrill-seekers that the animals are there. In addition, the State also should prohibit the future possession of nonhuman primates and regulate their handling and care. Many nonhuman primates carry serious diseases, such as hepatitis, that are harmful and contagious to people and animals.

Supporting Argument

Large carnivores kept as pets often escape or are

released when their owners become overwhelmed by the demands of caring for them. Reportedly, local and county law enforcement authorities have spent significant time and money unsuccessfully trying to track and capture these animals. For example, an article in the *Detroit News* (5-28-98) reported on police efforts to capture a large cat that was spotted in the community of Woodhaven. Apparently, a man was seen dumping the animal in the woods. Officers set up steel cage traps baited with raw meat and used helicopters equipped with an infrared camera in hopes of catching the animal.

Opposing Argument

Many large carnivores make good domestic pets and do not cause problems. It is unfair for government to restrict the choice of pets. This is a local issue and should be decided on a local level through ordinances. Many communities have rejected attempts to ban these animals, and should have the right to continue to allow them.

Legislative Analyst: N. Nagata

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill will result in an indeterminate, but probably negligible increase in State Department of Agriculture administrative costs. Local units of government that do not have a permitting program currently, or that do not have an ordinance banning ownership of large carnivores, will experience indeterminate increases in both administrative and enforcement costs. The bill allows affected local governments to assess permit fees to generate revenue sufficient to cover these costs. As the bill bars ownership of large carnivores that were not already in the possession of a person prior to the effective date of the bill, the increase in local government costs and revenues will be temporary.

Fiscal Analyst: P. Graham

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.