WEST virginia legislature

**FISCAL NOTE**

2022 regular session

Introduced

House Bill 4577

By Delegates Hamrick, Paynter, Dean, Zukoff, Griffith, Thompson, and Pushkin

Introduced February 08, 2022; Referred to the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources then the Judiciary then Finance]

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section, designated §19-20-6b, relating to creating the Compassion for Community Cats Fund; and providing that the fund is administered by the Commissioner of Agriculture; providing definitions; the source of funds; and how the funds are to be used.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 20. DOGS AND CATS.

§19-20-6b. Compassion for Community Cats Fund.

(a) There is established in the Department of Agriculture a special fund to be known as the “Compassion for Community Cats Fund.” The fund shall be administered by the Commissioner of Agriculture and shall be credited with:

(1) All fees collected pursuant to §19-20B-1 *et seq.* of this code;

(2) All criminal penalties collected pursuant to §19-20-12, §19-20-17, §19-20-19, and §19-20-24 of this code as they may apply to cats;

(3) Moneys as may be appropriated by the Legislature; and

(4) Any return on investment of moneys deposited in the fund.

(b) Moneys in the fund shall be used by the department solely for grants to municipalities and counties to establish programs to humanely trap community cats, sterilize, ear-tip, vaccinate against rabies, defray costs incurred by a qualified nonprofit community cat caregiver, and return each community cat to the location where the community cat was trapped.

(c) The department may not use any moneys in the fund for administrative costs of the department.

(d) As used in this section:

(1) “Community cat” means a cat, whether or not fearful of, or socialized to, humans, that has no known owner, lives and freely roams in the outdoors, and that may or may not be cared for by a person, including, but not limited to, a person who provides food, water, veterinary care, or indoor or outdoor protection from the weather;

(2) “Qualified nonprofit community cat caregiver” means a person, or organization, who provides care to a community cat, including, but not limited to, a person, or organization, who provides food, water, veterinary care, or indoor or outdoor protection from the weather, and who is registered as a 501(c) (3) organization with the Internal Revenue and the state of West Virginia.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create the Compassion for Community Cats Fund.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.