



Protecting PA's Pups



**A Special Report on Dog Law Enforcement
by Auditor General Eugene A. DePasquale**

DEAR FELLOW PENNSYLVANIANS,

We love our canine companions. Our furry friends bring great joy into our lives with their selfless love and adoration.

One arm of state government designed to help protect the welfare of dogs is the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement (BDLE), which exists under the Department of Agriculture. In 2013, I issued a special performance audit reviewing how well the bureau — which inspects dog kennels, oversees dog licensing, checks rabies vaccinations and more — was enforcing dog-law changes the General Assembly made in 2008.

That audit identified a lot of work to be done to ensure dog wardens were appropriately trained and kennels were appropriately inspected. I am pleased to say that BDLE has enacted most of my recommendations from that 2013 audit and that its staff is better able to protect dogs because it has done so.

But I can't say it is all *happy tails* for the bureau. In fact, 2020 marks the culmination of years of financial struggle for the bureau and may be the year dog wardens can no longer make sure dogs and puppies offered for sale or held in boarding facilities are kept in safe, humane conditions.

It's a matter of economics. First, the fees charged for dog licenses and kennel licenses, which make up nearly 90 percent of the bureau's revenue, have not been raised in 24 years — nearly a quarter of a century. Can you imagine running your business today while charging the same prices you did in 1996? Even if you've reduced your staff by 18 percent and are selling more product? That's what's happening to BDLE, and the health of dogs and puppies will suffer dramatically if, as the bureau predicts, it runs out of money in July 2020.

Second, more than \$200,000 that BDLE generates each year is diverted to pay for another state agency's computer system — an amount that equates to a loss of \$4.4 million since 1998.

Under state law, only the General Assembly can stop the annual diversion and raise those 24-year-old licensing fees, which are significantly lower than other states' fees. Bills have previously been proposed to do exactly that, but they have never made it to the governor's desk.

This special report reviews the role of the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement and assesses the changes its senior staff have made in the last seven years. It also amplifies the alarms the bureau has sounded for years about its financial state and offers recommendations to allow the bureau to continue its important work to ensure the health and safety of our canine companions.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Sincerely,



Eugene A. DePasquale



Auditor General DePasquale sits with Cappy, who was found as a stray in the Capitol complex in April 2019. The Pennsylvania Capitol Police Department adopted Cappy and made her a "community service dog."

GLOSSARY

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's website, here are standard definitions for the types of kennels that operate in the state:

Kennel: Any establishment in or through which at least 26 dogs are kept or transferred in a calendar year, or a boarding kennel as defined in this act.

Private kennel: A kennel not meeting the definition of "commercial kennel" where dogs are kept or bred by their owner, for the purpose of hunting, tracking and exhibiting in dog shows, performance events or field and obedience trials.

Pet shop kennel: Any kennel or person that acquires and sells dogs for the purpose of resale, whether as owner, agent or consignee, and sells or offers to sell such dogs on a retail basis.

Dealer kennel: A kennel operating within the commonwealth which:

1. publicly or privately sells or offers for sale any dog as an owner, agent or assignee for a fee, commission or percentage of the sale price;
2. transfers dogs at wholesale for resale to another; or
3. offers or maintains dogs at wholesale for resale to another. The term does not include a pound, shelter or common carrier or a kennel defined elsewhere in this section.

Rescue network kennel: A kennel that utilizes rescue network kennel homes with the goal of ultimately transferring the dog to a permanent owner or keeper through any means of transfer.

Research kennel: Any Federal research kennel or other research kennel duly registered with and inspected by the Federal Government under the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act (Public Law 89-544, 7 U.S.C. § 2131 et seq.) and its attendant regulations.

Boarding kennel: Any establishment available to the general public where a dog or dogs are housed for compensation by the day, week or a specified or unspecified time. The term shall include any boarding facility operated by a licensed doctor of veterinary medicine whether or not this facility is on the same premises as a building or structure subject to the provisions of the "Veterinary Medicine Practice Act." The term shall include any establishment available to the general public that, for consideration, takes control of a dog from the owner for a portion of a day for the purposes of exercise, day care or entertainment of the dog. This term does not include an establishment engaged only in dog grooming or dog training.

Nonprofit kennel: A kennel registered under as a nonprofit entity or a nonprofit animal control kennel. The term shall include kennels operated by approved medical and veterinary schools and nonprofit institutions conducting medical and scientific research, which shall be required to register, but shall not be required to pay any of the license fees set by this act.

Commercial kennel: A kennel that breeds or whelps dogs and:

1. sells or transfers any dog to a dealer or pet shop-kennel, or
2. sells or transfers more than 60 dogs per calendar year.

For more information, see <https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Animals/DogLaw/kennel-licensing-inspections/Pages/default.aspx>.

BACKGROUND

National context

Nationally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspects kennels for adherence to the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), which became law in 1966 and was most recently amended in 2013.¹ The AWA establishes minimum standards of care and treatment for certain animals bred for commercial sale, used in research, transported commercially or exhibited to the public.

Some animal welfare advocates have observed that, under the current federal administration, the USDA is undertaking fewer enforcement actions and has removed some public records, while heavily redacting others, on its website.^{2,3}

U.S. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pa., introduced the “WOOF Act” in 2019 to increase oversight of commercial kennels. His proposed legislation, which has 213 co-sponsors, would prevent a dog breeder whose USDA license has been suspended or revoked from continuing to operate through a new license acquired by another person at the same address.⁴ The bill was referred to the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Livestock and Foreign Agriculture in March 2019 and has not moved.⁵

State context

Pennsylvania’s Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement (BDLE) employs 41 dog wardens who inspect the commonwealth’s roughly 2,600 kennels⁶ at least twice annually for adherence to the state’s Dog Law, which was last updated in 2008.⁷

The Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement’s main responsibilities are:

- Ensuring all dogs at least 3 months old are licensed and vaccinated against rabies,
- Picking up and transporting stray dogs,
- Inspecting kennels,
- Investigating illegal kennels,
- Monitoring dangerous dogs, and
- Investigating and reimbursing for livestock damages caused by dogs and coyotes.

The bureau’s work helps ensure human health and animal welfare. It also ensures that dogs sold by state breeders are healthy.

¹ 7 U.S.C. § 2131 *et seq.* <https://www.nal.usda.gov/awic/animal-welfare-act>

² Brulliard, Karin. The Washington Post. “USDA’s enforcement of animal welfare laws plummeted in 2018, agency figures show.” Published Oct. 18, 2018. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2018/10/18/usdas-enforcement-animal-welfare-laws-plummeted-agency-figures-show/>. Accessed Jan. 29, 2020.

³ Kaplan, Sarah. The Washington Post. “Amid outcry, some animal welfare documents are restored to USDA website.” Published Feb. 17, 2017. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/animalia/wp/2017/02/17/amid-outcry-some-animal-welfare-documents-restored-to-usda-website/>. Accessed Jan. 29, 2020.

⁴ ASPCA. “The WOOF Act Would Keep Problematic Puppy Breeders Out of Business.” Published Feb. 6, 2019. <https://www.aspc.org/news/woof-act-would-keep-problematic-puppy-breeders-out-business>. Accessed Jan. 29, 2020.

⁵ Fitzpatrick’s bill is H.R. 1002. For details, see <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1002/text>.

⁶ For definitions of the various kinds of kennels, see the glossary.

⁷ Act 119 of 2008. To read the 2008 changes in their entirety, go to <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/uconsCheck.cfm?yr=2008&sessInd=0&act=119>.

The Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement is designed to be self-sufficient and does not receive any appropriation from the state's General Fund. The Dog Law account relies primarily on dog license revenues, kennel license revenues, and money obtained through the issuance of fines and civil penalties assessed while enforcing the Dog Law.

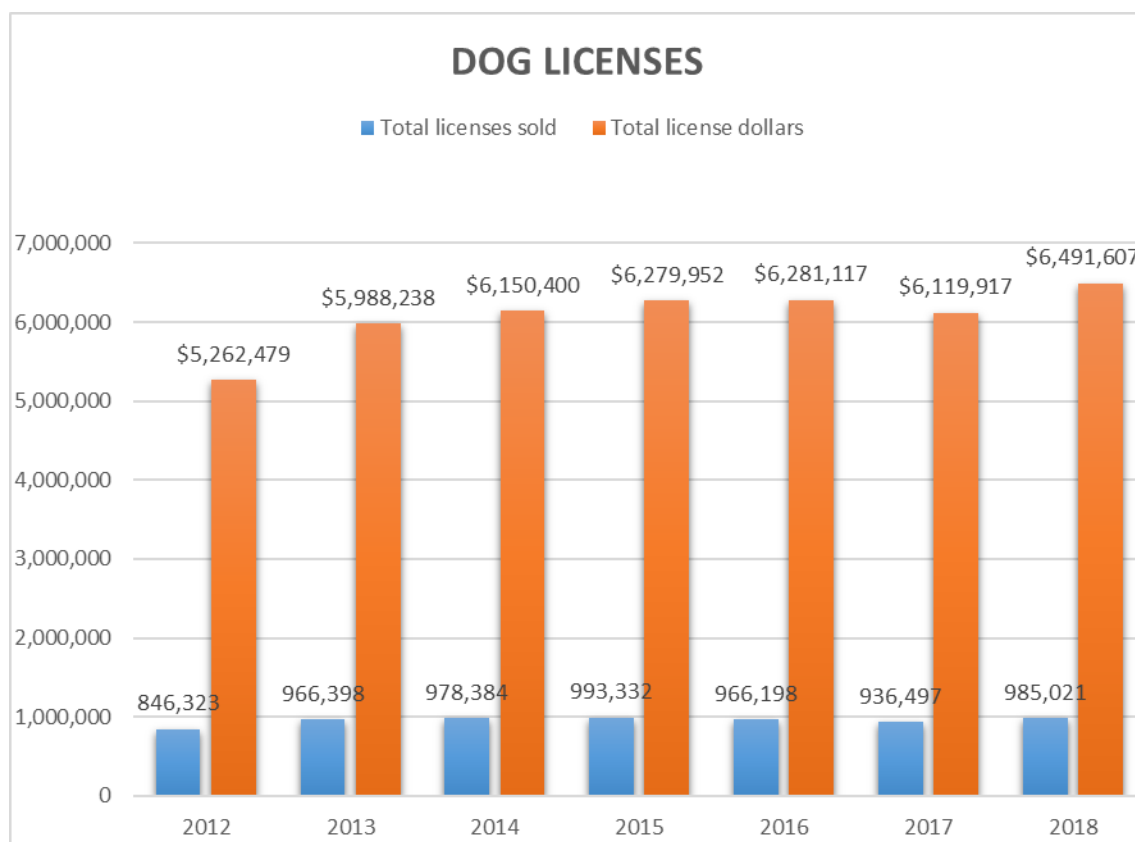
Though dog wardens are the state's boots on the ground at kennels, they are not the officials who investigate animal cruelty allegations. That duty falls to humane society police officers⁸ or law-enforcement agencies such as Pennsylvania State Police. The role of dog wardens is to make referrals to these proper authorities for such cruelty investigations.

Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement by the numbers

It is clear by the numbers that the bureau has been increasing its efforts in several areas since the Department of the Auditor General's 2013 performance audit.

Dog licenses

Dog license revenues are on an upward trajectory, as is the number of licenses. The number of dog licenses sold rose 16.4 percent from 2012 to 2018, and the total dog license revenues collected rose 23.4 percent to nearly \$6.5 million.



⁸ Humane society police officers (HSPOs) are authorized to enforce Pennsylvania's animal-cruelty laws under 22 Pa.C.S.A. § 3701-3718. Any humane society or Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) can employ HSPOs. For more, see <https://www.animallaw.info/statute/pa-cruelty-chapter-37-humane-society-police-officers>.

License fees in other states

For comparison, here is a look at how much annual dog licenses cost in some other states. Most states offer lower license prices for spayed or neutered (known as “altered”) dogs and require higher fees for unaltered dogs.

Ohio: Each county sets its own rates. One-year licenses cost up to \$20; three-year licenses cost up to \$60; and lifetime licenses cost up to \$200. Counties also must charge a late fee equal to the cost of a one-year license if a dog’s license is not renewed by Jan. 31 each year.

New Jersey: Each municipality sets its own rate, with a maximum annual fee of \$21, according to nj.gov.

Michigan: Each county sets its own rates. One-year licenses cost up to \$17 for an altered dog and up to \$26 for an unaltered dog. Three-year licenses for altered animals cost up to \$51 and up to \$78 for unaltered animals.

New York: Each municipality sets its own rate. In New York City, a one-year license for an altered dog is \$8.50 and \$34 for an unaltered dog. In Albany, a one-year license is \$16 for an altered dog and \$23 for an unaltered dog.

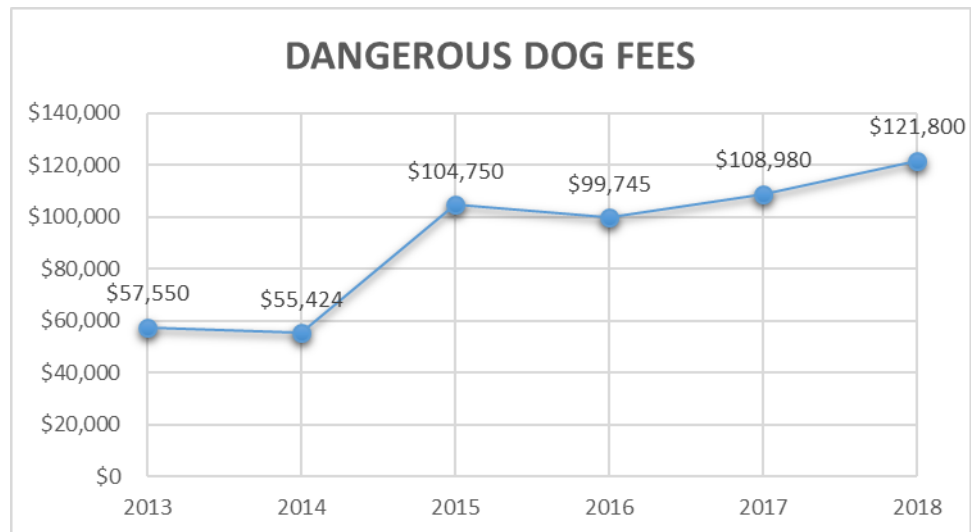
Note that the cost for a one-year dog license is \$6.50 for spayed/neutered dogs (known as “altered” dogs) and \$8.50 for non-spayed/non-neutered dogs (known as “unaltered” dogs). Those fees have not risen since 1996 — nearly a quarter of a century.

If they were tied to the rate of inflation, those fees would be roughly \$11 and \$14 today — still significantly lower than the fees charged in many other states. (See “*License fees in other states*”).

A lifetime license for an altered dog is \$31.50, and a lifetime license for an unaltered dog is \$51.50 — amounts that have also held steady since 1996.

The bureau has also increased the amount of money it collects for dangerous dogs listed on its registry by 111 percent from 2013 to 2018. In Pennsylvania, the term “dangerous dog” includes those that have bitten a human and/or domestic animal without provocation.⁹

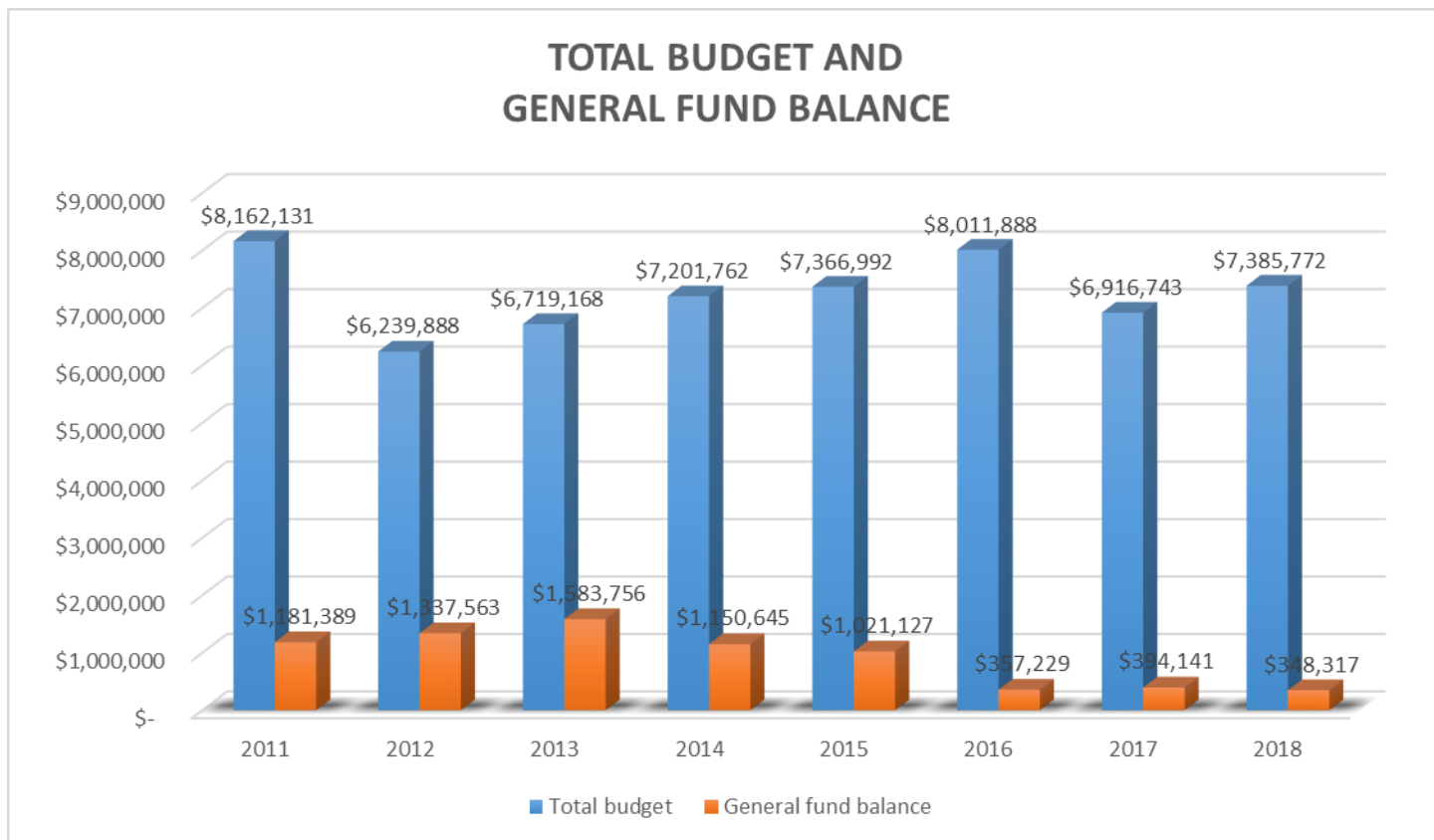
Dangerous dog fees are \$500 annually for the life of the dog.



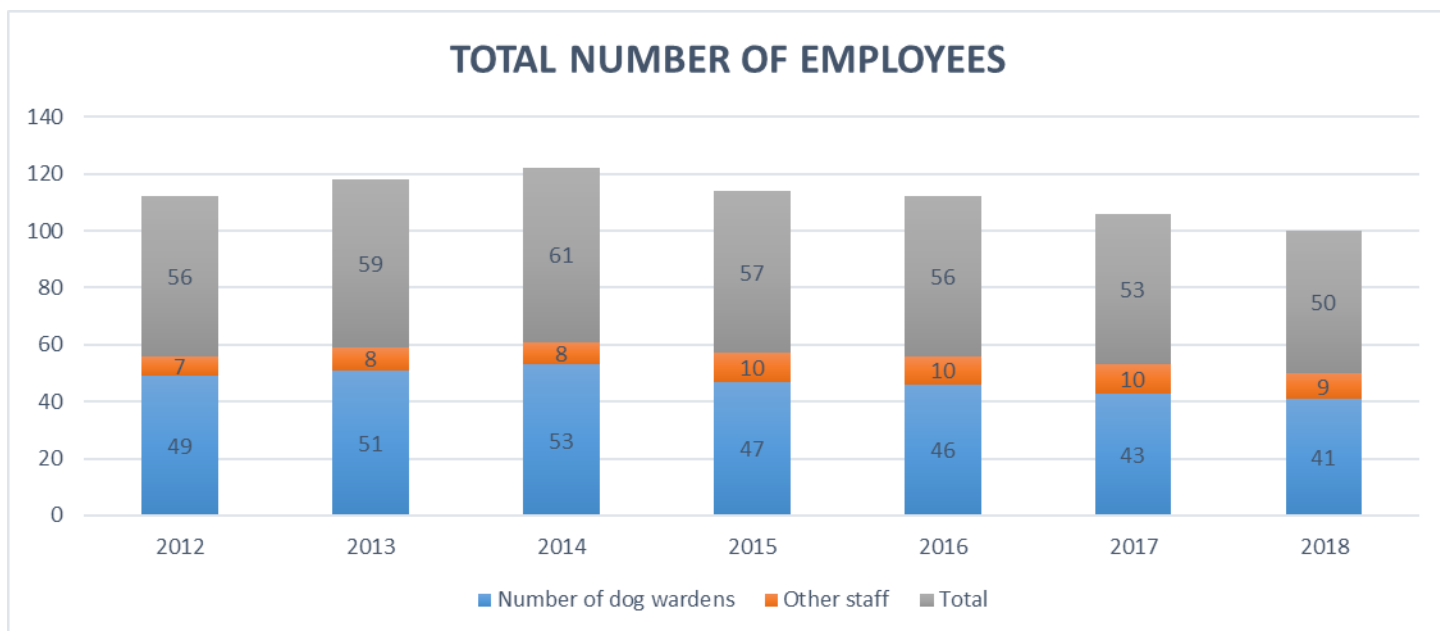
⁹ For details on the criteria required for a dog to be considered dangerous, see <https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Animals/DogLaw/Dangerous%20Dogs/Pages/default.aspx>.

Despite these sales increases, BDLE senior staff emphasized the department's declining general fund balance, blaming the decrease largely on the dog licensing fee — which represents the bulk of the bureau's revenue — remaining stagnant for 24 years.

Repeatedly in annual reports, the bureau has pointed out its declining fund balance — which decreased drastically from 2015 to 2016, when it fell to less than \$400,000 annually. Bureau senior staff said they cannot fill some dog warden and supervisory positions because of this decreasing financial position.



These staff shortages means that each warden covers more territory than in previous years. The bureau now has 50 total staff members, which includes 41 dog wardens who cover all 67 counties. This represents an 18.3 percent decrease from the 2014 high of 61 total staff, including 53 wardens.



The decrease in staff has stretched current wardens and supervisors, BDLE senior staff said. For instance, at least 20 wardens cover multiple counties and — because the bureau reduced the number of supervisory regions from seven to six in 2018 — three northern supervisors cover at least a dozen counties in a geographically large area.

Bureau Director Kristen Donmoyer said that, because of the bureau's current financial situation, they have been unable to fill that seventh supervisor vacancy, and the dog wardens in that region were reassigned.

Overall, Donmoyer said, without solid financial footing, the bureau cannot perform optimally to protect Pennsylvania's dogs and humans.

"We're seeing increases in (license) sales, but it's not enough" to offset the rising costs of personnel, benefits and IT needs, Donmoyer said.

In its 2018 annual report, the bureau issued a dire warning about its financial state, saying:

"Despite the Bureau's continuous efforts to streamline and cut costs while increasing dog license sales, the Dog Law Restricted Account will go negative as early as January of 2020 (Fiscal Year 2020-21). The only reason the Dog Law Restricted Account has not gone negative to date is due to extraordinary management measures, such as not filling critical vacancies or making necessary IT investments.

"If the bureau maintains the current financial course, it will no longer be able to keep dogs and the public safe. That means increasingly fewer dog wardens to pick up strays, inspect kennels, or investigate dog bites and illegal kennels."¹⁰

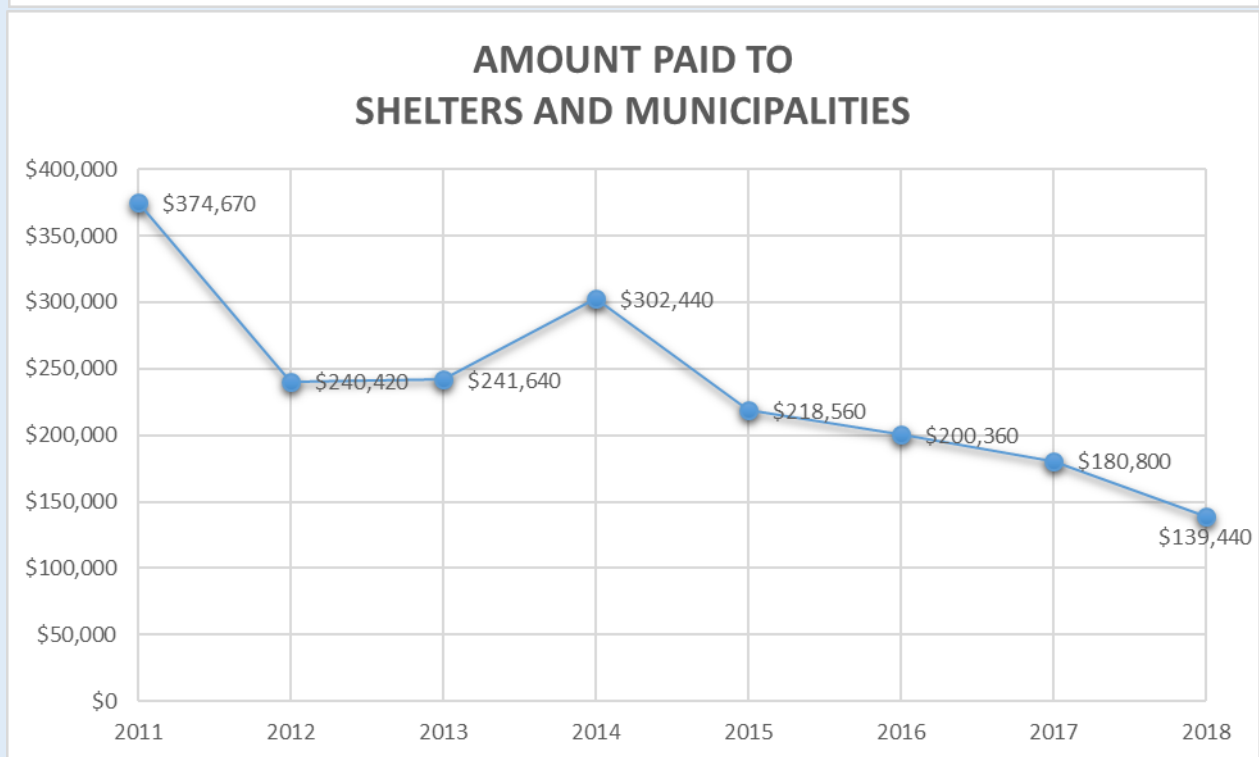
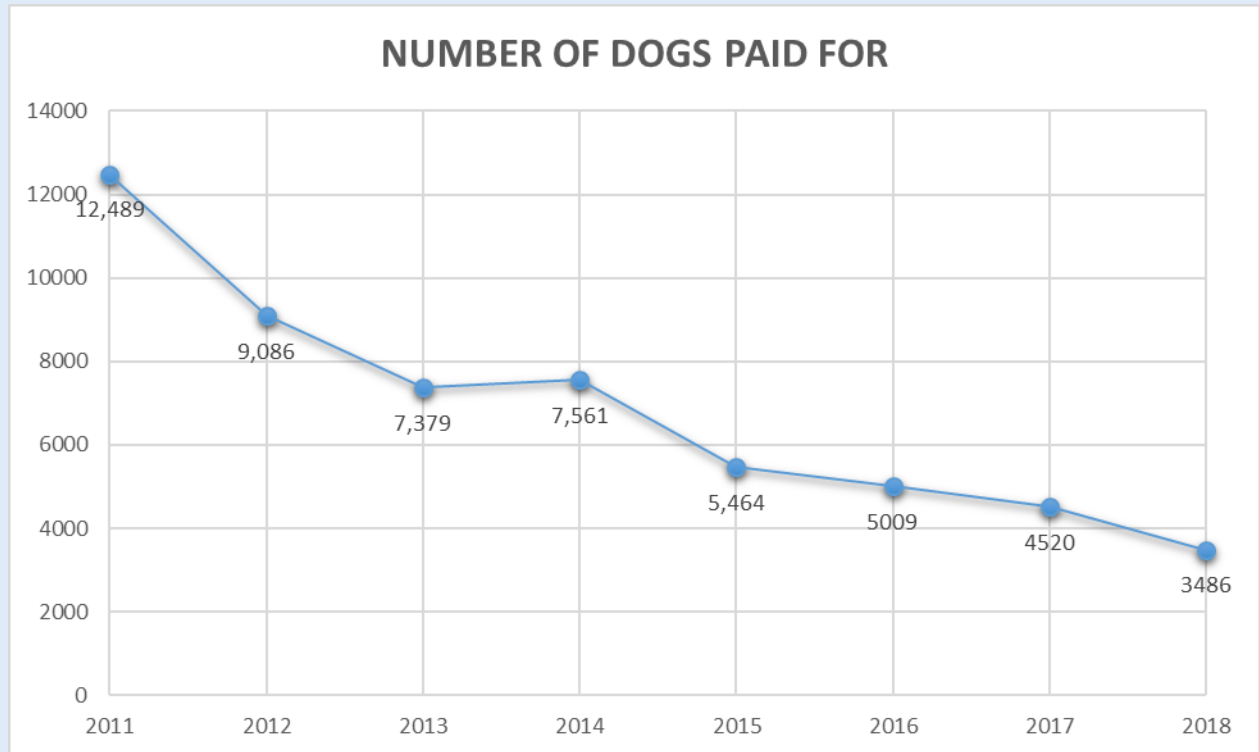
Donmoyer said in January 2020 that the latest estimate for the fund to become insolvent is July 2020. In the meantime, she said, "We are going to do our best until we can't do it anymore."

¹⁰ Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. *"The Dog Law: Report to the Pennsylvania General Assembly; Act 225 of 1982, as amended by Act 119 of 2008."* Page 5. Published April 2019. <https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Animals/DogLaw/Documents/2018%20Annual%20Report.pdf>. Accessed Jan. 29, 2020.

Stray dogs

The bureau has seen a decrease in the amount it pays in reimbursements for stray dogs in recent years. The bureau reimburses eligible shelters after a shelter has held a dog at least 48 hours.

The number does not include strays returned to owners, strays found in municipalities that have contracts with a local shelter, or shelters that do not submit claims for reimbursement.



Some external developments have been part of the decrease in reimbursements. For example, social media pages dedicated to finding lost dogs and rehoming strays has, according to bureau staff, drastically reduced the number of stray dogs being taken to shelters.

OVERVIEW

Despite the BDLE's increasing efforts to improve its functioning, not all dogs in Pennsylvania are held in safe, humane conditions. The 2008 changes to the Dog Law and Libre's Law¹¹ in 2017 have gone a long way toward that goal, but the legislature must do more work to ensure the safety of all dogs in the state.

Key to keeping dogs safer is allowing modernization of the Dog Law and how it is administered. For example, the legislature must increase the licensing fees, even marginally, so that the BDLE is in a good financial position and is able to be fully staffed. Without a legislative solution to increase the 24-year-old licensing fees, BDLE will continue to struggle to fulfill its mission.

Also, although an appeals process is necessary for those whose kennel licenses are revoked or denied, the Dog Law must provide for strong enough penalties that kennel owners will not continue to operate and just pay the fines they receive. BDLE remains in litigation with several kennels over the conditions for the dogs they house, and at least one of those kennels — Eichenluft Working German Shepherds in Cumberland County — has been named to the Humane Society of the United States' "Horrible Hundred"¹² list for multiple years.

Another option is to expand the law to cover what Bureau Director Kristen Donmoyer calls "backyard breeders." BDLE receives many complaints about "backyard breeders" but cannot regulate them because they do not meet the 26-dog kennel licensure threshold.

"When I think of a puppy mill, that's what I think of: these backyard breeders," Donmoyer said. "Commercial kennels make up only 2 percent of our oversight, and we ensure each one has at least the mandated two inspections per year. So we can verify that those dogs are being taken care of.

"It's the ones we don't see that I worry about most."

Legislative efforts

BDLE staff have worked for years to advocate for bills that would modernize the Dog Law and bring dog and kennel license fees up to date, but none have made it to the governor's desk.

Current bills include:

House Bill 1504/Senate Bill 663: These companion bills would increase fees to \$10 for a one-year license and \$49 for a lifetime license. They would also allow BDLE to set future dog license rate increases, among other modernizing features. Both bills have not moved after being referred to their respective chambers' Agriculture and Rural Affairs committees in May 2019.

Senate Bill 798: This bill would increase the dangerous dog fee from \$500 to \$1,000 annually. It is expected to generate an additional \$111,500 per year for BDLE. As of Jan. 27, 2020, it was eligible to be voted on by the Senate.

House Bill 1277: This bill would allow the BDLE to retain all the revenue it receives from Dog Law citation fines instead of giving roughly \$200,000 each year to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts for its computer system. It unanimously passed the House Jan. 14, 2020, and headed to the Senate for potential consideration.

Findings and recommendations review

The 2013 audit contained two broad findings: one on inadequate management control structure and one on finances. Overall, BDLE senior staff followed many of that audit's recommendations, resulting in the bureau having a stronger position from which it operates.

Rather than address the individual recommendations and how they were followed, this report more helpfully discusses the changes BDLE staff made to address the inadequacies identified in the prior audit.

¹¹ Act 10 of 2017. To read the full act, see www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/uconsCheck.cfm?yr=2017&sessInd=0&act=10.

¹² For the May 2019 "Horrible Hundred" report, see https://www.humanesociety.org/sites/default/files/docs/2019_Horrible-Hundred_0.pdf. Pennsylvania had 12 kennels listed in the report.

PRIOR FINDING 1

Lax leadership and ineffective program administration led the Dog Law Enforcement office to not enforce the Commercial Kennel Canine Health Regulations.

This first finding discussed the specific situation at BDLE shortly after the 2008 changes to the Dog Law and the Commercial Kennel Canine Health Regulations. It found that bureau staff were not adhering to inspection regulations for certain commercial kennels that were struggling to implement the 2008 Dog Law, allowing the kennel owners additional time to bring their facilities into compliance. We also found that the bureau did not have all required equipment needed to properly inspect kennels.

During that prior investigation, auditors were able to accompany inspectors on kennel inspections. For this review, we were limited to interviews and documentation, including the public kennel inspection reports posted on the Dog Law's website. Because several years have passed since that prior audit, the majority of those initial issues have been resolved, including the lack of proper equipment.

When asked for follow-up documentation on how the bureau has dealt with this issue, senior staff responded with information about the number of inspections. Donmoyer highlighted that all kennels undergo at least the mandatory two inspections per year. Staff also make additional contact and visits to kennels that were previously found to be out of compliance, including performing unannounced inspections.

The first finding also detailed five specific problems that arose from the bureau having an inadequate management control structure:

1. Lack of written standard operating procedures,
2. Lack of formal training for dog wardens,
3. Lack of monitoring citations,
4. Lack of adequately monitoring the number of transferred dogs, and
5. Lack of adequate supervisory review and confusing inspection form language.

The bureau's leadership was changed after the 2013 performance audit. Kristen Donmoyer, a former kennel compliance supervisor, became the bureau director and continues to hold that position. The bureau director role oversees all bureau operations and works directly with stakeholders as well as the governor's office, the budget office and more, Donmoyer said.

In 2012, the Department of Agriculture created a director of enforcement position within the bureau. That role, which Donmoyer initially held, is designed to oversee the day-to-day operations of field staff; work closely with the supervisory team; and review/approve search warrants, misdemeanor filings and administrative actions, Donmoyer said.

Since 2014, Donmoyer has served in both roles. She attributes the need to have the roles combined to the bureau's generally declining financial position over the last several years.

Several current and former dog wardens interviewed for this report said that the understaffing issue prevents BDLE from fully performing tasks such as verifying dog licenses and rabies vaccines except in response to public complaints. Understaffing may also contribute to lower-than-expected licensing rates.

PRIOR FINDING 1 (cont.)

LACK OF WRITTEN STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

BDLE does indeed have written standard operating procedures (SOPs) and was able to easily produce them for review. The SOPs clearly detail expected dog warden behavior. Current and former dog wardens interviewed for this report said that the procedures are often revised based on current events.

Regional supervisors are responsible for overseeing dog wardens and can monitor wardens' daily activities through an internal database.

As previously noted, BDLE moved from seven supervisory regions to six in 2018. This change has created situations where some wardens live quite a distance from their supervisor and/or regional office.

Of supervisors' interactions with wardens, Donmoyer said, "Supervisors conduct annual employee reviews, work side-by-side in the field with their staff, and hold quarterly meetings to ensure that wardens are aware of the current priorities of the BDLE and any change in the standard operating procedures."

LACK OF FORMAL TRAINING FOR DOG WARDENS

The Dog Law establishes the criteria for training dog wardens. It details the topics that must be covered, which include dog handling, humane capture and knowledge of proper dog sanitation and shelter; and it specifies that the training provided must be a minimum of 64 hours.¹³

Warden candidates must pass a test to demonstrate their knowledge of the material and their readiness to perform the job, according to the law.

The 2013 audit found such training nonexistent. For this report, current and former dog wardens and BDLE senior staff discussed the training that is now offered.

Verification of compliance with the law was requested of senior staff, who provided a one-page spreadsheet that purportedly showed dates that individual staff members had completed certain trainings. When asked for further documentation, Donmoyer said the bureau keeps "certificates of completion if offered, PowerPoints/materials if available, and general invoices for proof of payment for trainings by outside organizations."

A few observations could be made from the spreadsheet. First, it appears some wardens have completed trainings that others with similar time on the job have not. Second, the spreadsheet does not indicate whether the training provided meets the required 64 hours as dictated by law.

Firsthand accounts of the bureau's training program indicated further concern. Current and former dog wardens interviewed for this report said the training program insufficiently follows the subject matters outlined in the law. Also, some of the dog wardens said they had not received some training as indicated on the spreadsheet.

Donmoyer said that not all warden candidates receive the final test at the same point in the training because a passing score of 60 percent is required. "When the test is given varies based on the individual; some are faster learners than others," Donmoyer said.

¹³ 3 P.S. § 459-901(b)

PRIOR FINDING 1 (cont.)

LACK OF MONITORING CITATIONS

Based upon the information BDLE senior staff provided for this report, it appears this area of concern has been addressed. The bureau now uses an internal dashboard program to review monitoring reports, citations and warden progress.

LACK OF ADEQUATELY MONITORING THE NUMBER OF TRANSFERRED DOGS

The 2013 audit found that the format of the kennel inspection forms used at that time insufficiently recorded the number of dogs transferred and thus made it difficult to track over the course of the year. This is important because the number of dogs transferred annually determines the class of each kennel.

The form has since been revised to make this information more readily available and trackable. The bureau reports that any kennel that transfers more dogs than its kennel license allows for receives a third inspection at that time to ensure compliance with the new kennel class requirements.

The standard operating procedure manual now also includes specific instructions on how to properly count and document the number of transferred dogs.

LACK OF ADEQUATE SUPERVISORY REVIEW AND CONFUSING INSPECTION FORM LANGUAGE

This area of concern has also been fully addressed through updated procedures in the bureau's internal software for reviewing and correcting kennel inspection forms.

PRIOR FINDING 2

The Dog Law Enforcement Office needs to improve stewardship over receipts and disbursements of the Dog Law Restricted Account.

The Dog Law establishes a “Dog Law Restricted Account” for the BDLE to use to complete the duties outlined in the law. The account is designed to allow BDLE to be self-sufficient by relying on dog license revenues, kennel license revenues, and money obtained through the issuance of citations or fines and civil penalties assessed while enforcing the Dog Law.

The 2013 audit found that not all of the money in the account was being used to cover Dog Law-related expenses and personnel. According to the limited documentation reviewed for this report, it appears that issue has been corrected. As Donmoyer said via email: “All employees coded to the Dog Law Restricted Account perform 100 percent BDLE duties except for a microbiologist who performs the rabies testing.”

Other general government costs paid out of the Dog Law Restricted Account in the last five years also appear to be directly related to administration of the Dog Law.

However, current law caps the amount BDLE can raise each year through fines and penalties at \$69,181. The law also requires that any money above that amount is sent to the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) for its computer system. Each year since 1998, BDLE has given roughly \$200,000 to the AOPC, which equates to about \$4.4 million the bureau has had diverted from its coffers. Given BDLE’s dire financial status, this arrangement does not make sense and is, in fact, preventing dog wardens from being able to fully protect the health of dogs and puppies.

Conclusion

Despite strong, sustained efforts by the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement to improve its functioning, a lack of modernized funding makes it impossible for dog wardens to ensure dogs in kennels and boarding facilities are held in humane conditions. The 2008 changes to the Dog Law have gone a long way toward improving the conditions in which dogs must be kept, but the legislature must do more work to ensure the safety of all dogs in the state.

First, the General Assembly must allow BDLE to keep all of the money it collects through fines and penalties. Then, it must increase the 24-year-old dog and kennel licensing fees. Without these fixes, BDLE will cease to be able to fulfill its mission: keeping dogs and their human companions safe and healthy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The General Assembly should update the dog license and kennel license fees, taking into account the rate of inflation since 1996.
2. The General Assembly should allow the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement to retain all of the money generated through fines and penalties paid for through Dog Law citations.
3. The General Assembly should strengthen penalties for kennels that have serious violations and do not pass inspections and yet continue to operate during the appeal process.



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