

HB 426 -- Large Carnivore Act

Sponsor: Sutherland

This bill establishes the Large Carnivore Act which prohibits any person from owning, breeding, possessing, transferring ownership, or transporting a large carnivore unless he or she has a permit. "Large carnivore" is defined as any cat of the Felidae family that is nonnative to this state held in captivity excluding any common domestic or house cat or any species of bear that is nonnative to this state and held in captivity. The Division of Animal Health within the Department of Agriculture is required to implement and enforce the provisions of the bill.

Any person who owns or possesses a large carnivore is liable in a civil action for the death or injury of a human or another animal and for any property damage caused by the large carnivore. If a large carnivore escapes or is released intentionally or unintentionally, the owner is required to immediately notify law enforcement and is liable for all expenses associated with the efforts to recapture the large carnivore. As a condition of being permitted to own a large carnivore, the owner is required to show proof of having liability insurance in an amount of not less than \$250,000 and annually provide verification to the department that the insurance is being maintained.

Requirements for the permitting, confinement, handling, sanitation, feeding, transporting, identification, veterinary care, seizure, and euthanasia of large carnivores are specified. The requirements are in addition to any applicable state or federal law and do not preclude any local political subdivision from adopting more restrictive laws. Certain entities, law enforcement officers, animal control officers, veterinarians, and department employees are exempt from the bill.