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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Senator Melissa Hurtado, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

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<b>Bill No:</b>	SB 312	<b>Hearing Date:</b>	4/29/25
<b>Author:</b>	Umberg		
<b>Version:</b>	3/26/25		
<b>Urgency:</b>	No	<b>Fiscal:</b>	Yes
<b>Consultant:</b>	Reichel Everhart		

**Subject:** Dog importation: health certificates

### **SUMMARY:**

Under the Food and Agricultural Code, this bill establishes the requirements for a person selling, transporting, or importing a dog into the state for resale or to change ownership to obtain and submit to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the buyer, a health certificate that has been completed by a licensed veterinarian and is dated no more than ten days before the date on which the dog is brought into the state, as specified.

### **BACKGROUND AND EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes a certificate procedure for a person selling, transporting, or importing a dog into California for the purpose of resale or change of ownership (*Health and Safety Code Section 121720*).
- 2) The California Public Records Act gives everyone the right to access public records held by government agencies in California (*Government Code Sections 7920 – 7931*).

### **PROPOSED LAW:**

This bill:

- 1) Removes the certificate procedure for a person selling, transporting, or importing a dog into California for the purpose of resale or change of ownership from the Health and Safety Code and recasts it within the Food and Agricultural Code.
- 2) Clarifies the information that shall be provided in the certificate to include, but not be limited to the following:
  - a. The date of the examination.
  - b. A statement that the examination revealed no clinical evidence of infectious or communicable disease, including external parasites and fungi, and that, to the best of the veterinarian's knowledge, the dog

has not recently been exposed to such infectious or communicable disease.

- c. Any vaccinations, treatments, or tests, and the results of such administered to the dog.
  - d. A statement that the dog has been properly immunized against rabies by a vaccine approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) within 12 months before the date of importation into the State of California.
  - e. The number of dogs in the shipment.
  - f. A description of each dog in the shipment, including breed, age, and sex.
  - g. If microchipped, the microchip number for each dog in the shipment.
  - h. The physical address for both the origin and destination of the dog in the shipment.
    - i. A post office box, airport, parking lot, or other public or non-fixed location shall not be used as the physical address.
    - ii. The physical address shall correspond to a verifiable, permanent residence or business location where the animal resides or is housed.
  - i. The signature, printed name, physical address, and state license number of the accredited veterinarian who examined the dogs in the shipment.
  - j. The full name, physical address, email address, and telephone number of the consignor and the full name, physical address, email address, and telephone number of the buyer.
  - k. The USDA license number associated with the breeder of the dog, if applicable.
- 3) Requires the completion of a USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Form 7001.
  - 4) Requires the person selling, transporting, or importing the dog into this state for the purpose of resale or change of ownership to submit the health certificate to the department and the buyer via an electronic transmission.
  - 5) Defines “consignor” to mean a person, business, or organization that ships or sends goods to another party for sale or storage, retaining ownership until the goods are paid for.
  - 6) States CDFA shall develop, maintain, and make available to the public an internet website that contains the information it receives on every health certificate submitted pursuant to this chapter, without redaction, and the actual health certificates and is searchable by each item required in section 31000 of this bill.
  - 7) States a health certificate received by CDFA shall be made available to the public via an internet website of all the information it receives on every

health certificate without redaction. The website shall be searchable by each item required by this bill.

- 8) States CDFA shall make the health certificates it receives pursuant to this chapter available upon request and without requiring a person to submit a request under the California Public Records Act.

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:** According to the author:

California has been a longstanding leader in animal welfare, becoming the first state to prohibit the sale of purpose-bred puppies (typically acquired from puppy mills) in pet stores. However, dishonest sellers continue to exploit consumers through deceptive internet marketing practices and/or by posing as reputable local breeders. In reality, they import thousands of puppies from cruel out-of-state breeding operations, deceiving buyers and perpetuating the horrific puppy mill pipeline. Almost every state requires a health certificate for imported dogs to be uploaded to their state department of agriculture but California has never mandated sending these forms to the California Department of Agriculture, which has received and destroyed them for years. This health certificate information is crucial for consumers to confirm information about their dog, and for humane law enforcement agencies who work to investigate fraud during these transactions.

The San Diego Humane Society and the Western Division of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), co-sponsors of the legislation, along with other stakeholders, wrote in support of the legislation stating that the “transparency around the health, sources, flow, and volume of puppies being sold into California that SB 312 will afford is a critical step that will increase consumer protections and allow for better oversight and policymaking with respect to puppies being imported from puppy mills and breeders in other states.”

**ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION:**

None received.

**COMMENTS:**

Under Health and Safety Code Section 121720 a person seeking to bring a dog into this state or importing dogs into this state for the purpose of resale or change of ownership is required to obtain a health certificate with respect to the dog, to be

completed by a licensed veterinarian and is dated within 10 days prior to the date on which the dog is brought into the state. The code section does not address the redaction of information. This bill addresses this issue by saying that no information on the health certificate filed with CDFA shall be redacted.

In 2022, more than 1,000 beehives were reported stolen in California, with some incidents involving the loss of several hundred hives at once. In response, many beekeepers have voiced concerns about publicly disclosing the precise locations of their hives, citing fears of further theft. This has prompted the beekeeping community to seek a balance between regulatory transparency and the need to protect their assets. Similar considerations should be considered for dog breeders, who face comparable concerns regarding the potential theft of animals.

There have also been ongoing concerns about the inclusion of personal information—such as a veterinarian’s address and signature—on official documents, which in some cases has led to targeted harassment of individuals or businesses. Likewise, importers may be reluctant to disclose home addresses or contact details due to similar privacy and safety concerns. Health certificates can contain sensitive data, including signatures, license numbers, and other identifiable information that could be exploited to forge documents or create counterfeit credentials. Redacting such information could serve as a necessary safeguard against misuse and identity fraud.

The American Kennel Club wrote in support of the bill if amended to address privacy concerns. In their letter dated March 31, 2025, they wrote:

The AKC supports Senate Bill 312’s goal to fix the system of record keeping for the importation of dogs into the state for resale or change of ownership. As has been detailed extensively in media reports, the current regulatory regime is broken and in need of changes that ensure animals brought into California are, in fact, healthy.

That being said, the AKC has privacy concerns that the current language in the bill could see people’s personal information made public in ways that are both concerning and unnecessary. The AKC supports making public information related to the health of animals along with the state in which the animal is being transported from. This can give the public assurance that the animals being brought into the state are healthy along with identifying the types of animals that are being brought into the state and where they come from. However, listing home addresses of buyers and sellers creates privacy

concerns—including the risk of malicious actors being able to target specific people with easily accessible data.

To address these concerns, the author has worked with stakeholders and has agreed to the following amendments:

**Amendment One:**

On Page Four, line 26-27, strike “without redaction, and the actual health certificates, and” and insert “that”.

**Amendment Two:**

On Page Four, line 28, insert “except street names, address numbers, and phone numbers.”

A mock-up of this amendment will read:

**31001.** The department shall develop, maintain, and make available to the public an internet website that contains the information it receives on every health certificate submitted pursuant to this chapter that is searchable by each item required by Section 31000, except street names, address numbers, and phone numbers.

**RELATED LEGISLATION:**

AB 161 (Maddox, Chapter 350, Statutes of 2001): Requires all dog breeders to provide a written disclosure upon the sale of any dog with information such as the breeder’s name and address, the dog’s birth date, breed, sex, color, a veterinarian record, and a signed statement from the breeder that the dog has no known diseases.

AB 1809 (Maienschein, Chapter 498, Statutes of 2014): Requires importers of puppies purchased from out of state sources to file health certificates with their local county health department.

**SUPPORT:**

ASPCA (Co-Sponsor)  
San Diego Humane Society (Co-Sponsor)  
Animal Legal Defense Fund  
CalAnimals

Humane Society of San Bernardino Valley  
Humane World for Animals  
Inland Valley Humane Society & S.P.C.A.  
Michelson Center for Public Policy  
Pets Lifeline  
San Francisco SPCA  
Social Compassion in Legislation  
Valley Humane Society

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