

Ohio Considers Mandatory Rabies Vaccination For Ferrets

Ohio is considering a bill that would mandate rabies vaccinations for all pet ferrets.

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Under House Bill 446, ferret owners, keepers or harborers in Ohio must make sure their pet is properly vaccinated at all times or face a penalty of \$50.

Ferrets that are exempt from vaccination requirements include instances in which the ferret's well-being would be endangered by a vaccination against rabies as determined by a veterinarian; a ferret that is confined to the premises of an organization or a nonprofit corporation that is devoted to the care of, or providing hospital treatment for lost or homeless animals; a ferret that is confined for research purposes at a facility registered under the U.S. Animal Welfare Act; a ferret that is confined to an animal shelter.

Owners, keepers or harborers of a ferret that is vaccinated against rabies in another state and later moves to Ohio must provide proof of vaccination for the animal to the board of health of the health district in which they reside.

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, an industry trade group representing retailers, companion animal suppliers and hobbyist groups, among others, states that this type of legislation is not uncommon. For example, most states require cats to have rabies vaccination and require owners to provide proof of the vaccination upon demand.

PIJAC urges ferret owners to consult with their veterinarian to determine whether their pets fall within a vaccination exemption.

The legislation currently sits in the Senate Committee on State & Local Government & Veterans Affairs, where it waits for a committee hearing.