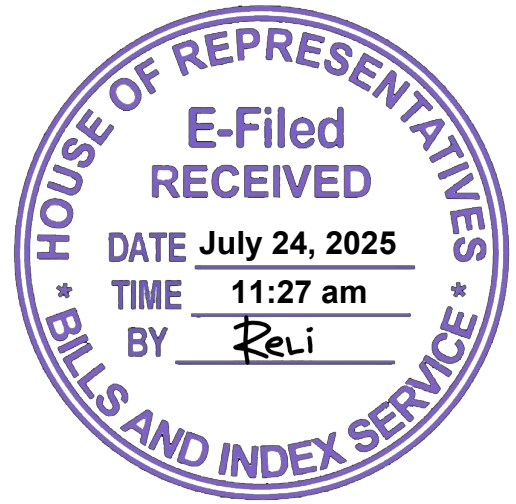


Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Quezon City, Metro Manila

**TWENTIETH (20<sup>th</sup>) CONGRESS**  
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

House Bill No. **2248**



---

Introduced by **Rep. Robert Nazal**

---

**AN ACT**  
**STRENGTHENING ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS,**  
**ENACTING A REVISED ANIMAL WELFARE ACT, THEREBY REPEALING**  
**REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8485, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10631,**  
**APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The Philippines regards animals as both treasured household companions and vital contributors to the rural economy. A nationwide survey in 2023 showed that sixty-four percent of Filipino households keep pets, four out of five of which care for at least one dog while roughly half keep cats. Yet only about ten thousand active veterinarians and fewer than five hundred clinics serve the entire country, leaving an estimated two-thousand pets for every veterinarian. On the production side, livestock generated more than sixty-three billion pesos, over fifteen percent of total agricultural output in the second quarter of 2024, demonstrating that humane husbandry is integral to food security and livelihoods.

Despite this importance, consistent animal-welfare enforcement remains elusive. Between January and May 2024, the Department of Health recorded 169 human rabies deaths, a thirteen-percent rise over the same period the previous year; from 2020 to 2024, rabies claimed 1,750 Filipino lives, and ninety-two percent of 2024 cases were traced to dog bites. High-profile abuse incidents involving poisoned strays, viral videos of pet maltreatment, and overcrowded transport continue to outrage communities and expose gaps in the current legal framework.

Republic Act 8485, as amended by RA 10631, provided a foundation for humane treatment but scattered enforcement across offices with limited resources. The proposed Revised Animal Welfare Act addresses these deficiencies by creating a dedicated Animal Welfare Bureau under the Department of Agriculture with nationwide reach and clear rule-making, inspection, and permitting powers. It deputizes animal-welfare enforcement officers from both law-enforcement agencies and accredited civil-society groups; codifies science-based standards for nutrition, shelter, transport, and the “five freedoms” for pets, livestock, working and laboratory animals; imposes stronger penalties ranging from higher fines and imprisonment to vehicle forfeiture and perpetual disqualification for habitual offenders; mandates animal-welfare education in all primary and secondary schools; and requires local government units to integrate spay-and-neuter programs and disaster-response protocols for animals into their Seal of Good Local Governance metrics.

Protecting animals also protects public health, supports farmers’ market access to export destinations that demand strict welfare certifications, and nurtures the national value of compassion. As President Ramon Magsaysay reminded the nation, “Those who have less in life should have more in law.” Animals, with no voice in court, deserve the law’s full protection, while Filipinos gain cleaner streets, safer food, and healthier communities. Swift passage of the Revised Animal Welfare Act will align Philippine standards with international best practices, strengthen biosecurity against emerging zoonotic threats, and fulfill the constitutional duty to safeguard a balanced and healthful ecology.

By supplying the modern enforcement architecture our data show is lacking, this measure balances the interests of pet owners, farmers, researchers, and the general public. Its enactment will prove that the country’s progress is measured not only by economic growth but also by the compassion it extends to every living creature that shares its islands.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



**Rep. ROBERT NAZAL**  
Representative

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

**TWENTIETH (20<sup>th</sup>) CONGRESS**  
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

House Bill No. **2248**

---

Introduced by **Rep. Robert Nazal**

---

**AN ACT**  
**STRENGTHENING ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS,**  
**ENACTING A REVISED ANIMAL WELFARE ACT, THEREBY REPEALING**  
**REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8485, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10631,**  
**APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

**CHAPTER I**  
**TITLE, DECLARATION OF POLICY, AND DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**SECTION 1. TITLE.**

This Act shall be known as “The Revised Animal Welfare Act”.

**SECTION 2. DECLARATION OF POLICY.**

It is the State’s policy to protect life, liberty, and property including the promotion of animal welfare by establishing a system of supervision and regulation to ensure humane treatment in all aspects of keeping, maintaining, handling, transporting, breeding, training, treating, and use of animals. Good animal welfare involves adherence to the five (5) basic freedoms of animals namely:

- A. Freedom from thirst, hunger, and malnutrition;
- B. Freedom from physical discomfort and pain;
- C. Freedom from injury and disease;
- D. Freedom to express normal behaviors; and
- E. Freedom from fear and distress.

**SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.**

As used in this Act:

- A. Animals refer to domesticated vertebrate and invertebrate species under the control of man, which may be food-producing, companion, laborers, aquatic, or laboratory. The term excludes humans;
- B. Animal facility refers to any facility, structure, or premises used for the purpose of keeping, caring, breeding, rearing, holding, gaming, training, trading, treating, or exhibiting animals, including but not limited to farms, zoos, aviaries, apiaries, kennels, race tracks, cockpits, pet shops, shelters, national or local government pounds, animal rescue centers, airports, and seaports quarantine stations, animal holding facilities, stables, livestock markets, stockyards, corrals, stud farms, stock farms, slaughterhouses, aquaria, laboratories, veterinary clinics, and veterinary hospitals;
- C. Animal welfare refers to the physical and psychological well-being of animals. It includes, but is not limited to, avoiding abuse, maltreatment, cruelty, and exploitation of animals by humans through the maintenance of appropriate standards for accommodation, feeding, and general care; preventing and treating diseases; assuring freedom from fear, distress, harassment, and unnecessary discomfort and pains and allowing animals to express natural behavior;
- D. Animal fighting venture refers to any event, show, exhibition, program, or other activity that involves a fight conducted between two (2) or more animals for purposes of sport, wagering, amusement, or entertainment;
- E. Animal Welfare Enforcement Officer refers to the Philippine National Police (PNP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and other law enforcement agencies, citizens' groups, community organizations, and other volunteer members of non-government organizations (NGOs), and people's organizations (POs) designated as such by the Secretary of Agriculture;
- F. Bureau refers to the Animal Welfare Bureau;
- G. Captive animals refer to animals that are confined for educational or recreational purposes in places such as but not limited to zoos, sanctuaries, rescue centers, sea or ocean facilities;
- H. Department refers to the Department of Agriculture (DA);
- I. Director refers to the individual in charge of the Bureau;
- J. Euthanasia refers to the Bureau-approved process or method of painless death of animals;

- K. Keeper refers to any person who owns, possesses, or has control or custody over an animal;
- L. Local government unit (LGU) refers to a province, city, or municipality;
- M. Pets refer to domestic animals documented or otherwise, intended for companionship, therapy, seeing and hearing guide, recreation and value formation, and breeding such as but not limited to dogs, cats, fishes, rabbits, rodents, reptiles, and birds that are either acquired locally or through importation under government rules and regulations;
- N. Person refers to any individual, corporation, company, business, enterprise, association, partnership, syndicate, trust, or other entity;
- O. Reporter refers to any person who reports a suspected violation of any provision of this Act to the proper authorities;
- P. Secretary refers to the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture;
- Q. Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP) refers to a legal action filed to harass, vex, exert undue pressure, or stifle any legal recourse that any person, institution, or the government has taken or may take in the enforcement of this Act;
- R. Transport facility refers to any public or private transportation, whether by air, water, or land, including tricycles and the like, used to move animals to a particular destination; and
- S. Wild animal refers to any animal species that is not normally domesticated in the Philippines, including those in captivity under the control of a person.

The Bureau may define such other terms as may be used in the implementation of this Act.

#### **SECTION 4. COVERAGE.**

This Act shall apply to all programs, activities, and undertakings of individuals, corporations, associations, organizations, or entities, including but not limited to animal producers, small-hold farmers, private entities, or government agencies, that handle, breed, train, keep, care for, transport, exhibit, display, use, or otherwise interact with animals, whether as pets, livestock, wildlife, or animals used for education, entertainment, or show; or own, operate, or maintain any facility that interacts with animals.

#### **SECTION 5. ANIMAL WELFARE PRINCIPLES.**

Animal welfare standards, practices, policies, and regulations shall be based on the following principles:

- A. Decisions regarding animal care, use, and welfare shall be made by balancing scientific knowledge and professional judgment with consideration of ethical and societal values;
- B. Animals must be provided with water, food, proper handling, health care, and an environment appropriate to their care and use, with thoughtful consideration for their species-typical biology and behavior;
- C. Animals should be cared for in ways that minimize fear, pain, stress, and suffering. Conservation and management of animal populations should be humane, socially responsible, and scientifically prudent;
- D. Protection of animal habitat is an animal welfare consideration;
- E. Consider the five (5) basic freedoms of animals:
  - 1. Freedom from thirst, hunger, and malnutrition;
  - 2. Freedom from physical discomfort and pain;
  - 3. Freedom from injury and disease;
  - 4. Freedom to express normal behaviors; and
  - 5. Freedom from fear and distress.
- F. Animals shall be treated with respect and dignity throughout their lives and, when necessary, provided with a humane death.

## **CHAPTER II THE ANIMAL WELFARE BUREAU**

### **SECTION 6. ANIMAL WELFARE BUREAU.**

The Bureau is hereby created as a line bureau under the DA. It shall establish regional, provincial, and municipal offices as appropriate and necessary to effectively and efficiently carry out the provisions of thiAct.

### **SECTION 7. POWERS AND FUNCTIONS.**

The Bureau shall have the following powers and functions:

- A. Formulate policies, guidelines, standards, rules, and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act;
- B. Provide minimum standards on the appropriate food, water, and shelter for each species of pets and animals depending on the age, breed, size, and special needs thereof;

- C. In consultation with the Land Transportation Office, Land Transportation Franchising Regulatory Board, Civil Aeronautics Board, the Maritime Industry Authority, other transport regulating body or agencies, experts, and animal welfare groups, set a species-specific standard for transportation of animals, including definitions for cruel confinement and restraint during transport,  
  
appropriate designs for transport cages and facilities, restraint types, provision of food and water, ventilation, and protection from extreme weather conditions;
- D. Establish an emergency animal response and rescue system to appropriately respond in cases of calamities such as but not limited to floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters;
- E. Promulgate guidelines for humane slaughter of animals, in consultation with the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS), LGUs and other concerned government agencies;
- F. Implement a system for inspection of animal facilities to ensure compliance with animal welfare standards and regulations;
- G. Monitor compliance of the LGUs with animal welfare programs, standards, rules, and regulations;
- H. Ensure proper coordination with NGOs, POs, and the academe for the strict implementation of rules and regulations;
- I. Formulate guidelines and qualifications related to research and testing on animals;
- J. Issue, suspend, or cancel permits or certifications pursuant to the purposes of this Act;
- K. Levy and collect fees for registration, certification, inspection and monitoring system, and other fees as the Bureau may deem necessary for the effective implementation of this Act;
- L. Keep records and documents pertaining to animal welfare in the country, and maintain a surveillance and management information system on animal welfare;
- M. Create a system and issue guidelines for the determination or approval of applications for certifications, authorizations, and permits necessary for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of animal facilities; issue said certifications, authorizations, and permits; and collect associated fees;

- N. Call upon any government agency for assistance consistent with its powers, duties, and responsibilities for the purpose of ensuring the effective and efficient implementation of this Act and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder. Such government agencies shall assist the Bureau when called upon for assistance using any available fund in its budget for the purpose; and
- O. Perform such other powers and functions, as may be prescribed by law or may be necessary to achieve the purposes of this Act.

#### **SECTION 8. COMPOSITION OF THE BUREAU.**

The Bureau shall be headed by a Director and assisted by two (2) Assistant Directors who shall supervise its administrative and technical services.

The Director must possess demonstrated knowledge, training, empathy, compassion, and experience in the field of agriculture, biology, animal husbandry, veterinary science, veterinary medicine, or other similar discipline.

#### **SECTION 9. PERSONNEL AND STAFFING PATTERN.**

Notwithstanding the provisions of existing laws, the Secretary of the DA shall require the Director of the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), as an interim Director of the Bureau, to submit a recommendation on the personnel and staffing pattern of the Bureau to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Civil Service Commission (CSC), within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act.

### **CHAPTER III THE ANIMAL WELFARE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**

#### **SECTION 10. DEPUTIZATION OF ANIMAL WELFARE ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.**

The Secretary of the DA shall deputize animal welfare enforcement officers from NGOs, citizens' groups, community organizations, and other volunteers who have undergone the necessary training for this purpose.

The PNP, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the NBI, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and other law enforcement agencies shall designate animal welfare enforcement officers who shall assist in the implementation of this Act. In the absence of such animal welfare enforcement officers, the law enforcement agencies shall continue to implement the law under their general mandate.

The animal welfare enforcement officers shall have the full authority to seize and rescue illegally traded and maltreated animals and arrest violators of this Act, subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations on arrest and detention. The absence of designated animal welfare enforcement officers in law enforcement agencies shall not preclude the enforcement of the provisions of this Act.

The Bureau shall set guidelines on the training, qualification, reporting, and coordination of deputized animal welfare enforcement officers to cover the criteria and training requirements for the deputization of animal welfare enforcement officers; and the mechanism for the supervision, monitoring, and reporting of these animal welfare enforcement officers.

## **CHAPTER IV BASIC ANIMAL CARE AND HANDLING GUIDELINES**

### **SECTION 11. PROVISION OF FOOD AND WATER.**

Any keeper of an animal must provide it with, or arrange for the provision of its access to appropriate nutritious food at least once a day, or at a frequency that is typical for the species, sufficient to maintain good health; and, if appropriate for the species, continuous access to potable water that is not frozen, and free of debris, feces, algae, and other contaminants.

The Bureau shall provide guidelines on the appropriate food, water, and shelter for the animals depending on the kind, nature, and special needs thereof.

### **SECTION 12. PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE SHELTER AND FACILITIES.**

Any keeper of an animal must provide it with regular access to a shelter that has a solid floor; provides protection from the sun, rain, and wind sufficient to maintain good health; is regularly cleaned and sanitized; and is large enough for the animal to lie down, fully stretch its limbs, turn around freely without any impediment, and stand up, including on its hind legs if applicable, allowing the animal to express natural behavior and locomotion.

### **SECTION 13. PROVISION OF VETERINARY MEDICAL CARE FOR SICK, COMPROMISED, OR INJURED ANIMALS.**

Any keeper of an animal must take all reasonable steps to ensure that its physical, health, and behavioral needs are met in accordance with good practice and scientific knowledge.

This shall include, at minimum, a hands-on examination at least once yearly by a licensed veterinarian; prompt treatment of any illness or injury by a licensed veterinarian; and, when needed, humane euthanasia by a licensed veterinarian.

### **SECTION. 14. PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE TRANSPORT FACILITY.**

Transport facilities for animals must be constructed, provisioned, and utilized as to avoid causing injury or undue suffering to the animals. Transport facilities shall include secure cages or restraint systems appropriate for the species being transported, as well as adequate ventilation to ensure the comfort and safety of the animal, appropriate to its nature and size.

#### **SECTION. 15. PROVISION OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ANIMALS TO EXPRESS NATURAL BEHAVIORS INCLUDING PLAY, PROVISION OF ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES, AND EXERCISE.**

Any keeper of an animal must provide it with regular opportunities to express species-specific natural behaviors, for play and exercise in an area of sufficient space, and for stimulation through environmental enrichment activities to promote their health and welfare. The Bureau, in consultation with stakeholders, shall implement a timeline for improving farm facilities in compliance with the provisions hereof.

### **CHAPTER V PROHIBITED ACTS**

#### **SECTION 16. PROHIBITION ON CRUELTY, MALTREATMENT, ABUSE, AND EXPLOITATION.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to torture, abuse, exploit, or maltreat any animal; to deprive or neglect to provide it with adequate care, sustenance, or shelter; or to cause or procure any animal to be tortured, maltreated or used in research or experiments not expressly authorized by the Bureau. An act of cruelty includes but is not limited to the following:

- A. Beating, harming, injuring, crushing, mutilating, maiming, disfiguring, stabbing, cutting, poisoning, drowning, torturing, tormenting, starving, overworking, or abusing an animal; or any other act or omission toward an animal, including any act of neglect, that causes its pain, suffering, or distress, whether physical or psychological;
- B. Exposing an animal to inhumane and unsafe conditions and situations including overcrowded, inappropriate, unclean, or unsanitary animal facilities, shelters, or transport facilities;
- C. Killing an animal by way of electrocution or gas chamber, or using any petrol or diesel exhaust; and,
- D. Using an animal in research or experiments not expressly authorized by the Bureau.

#### **SECTION 17. PROHIBITION ON NEGLECT.**

It shall be unlawful for any keeper of an animal to fail to provide it with basic care in accordance with Chapter V of this Act. It shall also be unlawful for any keeper of an animal to allow it to roam the streets resulting in its impoundment by the local impounding authority.

#### **SECTION 18. PROHIBITION ON KILLING OF ANIMALS.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to kill animals other than cattle, pigs, goats, sheep, poultry, rabbits, carabaos, horses, or other food animals for human consumption. The killing of pets and animals not declared as food animals for human consumption, or causing or procuring the same to be killed is prohibited except in the following instances:

- A. As part of the religious ritual of an established religion or sect, or a ritual required by a tribal or ethnic custom of indigenous cultural communities: Provided, That religious or tribal leaders shall keep records of such animal slaughter, in accordance with relevant guidelines issued on the matter;
- B. Euthanasia of a pet animal that is afflicted with an incurable communicable disease as determined and certified by a duly licensed veterinarian;
- C. Out of necessity to put an end to the misery suffered by an animal, other than that provided in the immediately preceding instance, as determined and certified by a duly licensed veterinarian;
- D. Prevention of an imminent danger to the life or limb of a human being;
- E. As an animal population control measure, as a last resort duly certified by the provincial/city veterinary officer;
- F. Euthanasia of an animal by a duly licensed veterinarian after the animal has been used in an authorized research or experiment in accordance with Section 26 of this Act;
- G. Humane slaughter of a farm animal; or
- H. Any other ground analogous to the foregoing as determined and certified by a duly licensed veterinarian.

In all of the above-mentioned cases, the killing shall at all times be done only through euthanasia or other humane procedure approved by the Bureau. For this purpose, humane procedures shall mean the use of the most scientific methods available as may be determined by the Bureau.

#### **SECTION 19. PROHIBITION ON ANIMAL FIGHTS.**

It is prohibited to subject animals to fights such as but not limited to dog fighting, carabao or bullfighting, or horse fighting not authorized or regulated by law. Any person who participates under the circumstances described herein shall be considered as an accessory in the commission of animal fighting and/or abetting in the commission of animal cruelty. The prohibition shall include, but not be limited to, pitting one (1) animal against another for the purpose of human entertainment, wagering, or sport. In certain instances, one (1) of the animals involved may be a “bait animal” used for the ostensible purpose of sport or training.

The prohibition on animal fights shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. Causing, procuring, permitting, encouraging, promoting, organize, sponsor, or inciting a fight in which an animal is pitted against another animal for any purpose such as dog fighting, horse fighting, and the like;
- B. Advertising, promoting, selling tickets, or otherwise assist in an animal fighting venture;
- C. Attending such fights;
- D. Breeding or training any animal for the purpose of having it fight, engage, or otherwise participate in an animal fighting venture;
- E. Permitting an animal fighting venture to take place on any site, structure, facility, or other premises under the person’s ownership or control;
- F. Attending, wagering on, or otherwise patronize an animal fighting venture; and,
- G. Causing or allowing a person who has not yet reached the age of sixteen (16) to attend an animal fighting venture.

Animal fighting ventures held during festivities, festivals, fiestas, and the like are not exempt from this section and are strictly prohibited.

## **SECTION 20. PROHIBITION ON DOG MEAT TRADING.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to engage in the trading, farming, capture, transport, sale, or slaughter of dogs and their meat for commercial human consumption. The trade of dogs shall include but shall not be limited to buying and/or selling of dogs, dog meats and carcasses, dog farming, collecting, and/or slaughtering of dogs for commercial consumption.

## **SECTION 21. PROHIBITION ON ABANDONMENT.**

It shall be unlawful for any keeper of an animal, whether temporary or permanent, to abandon it. Animal abandonment refers to leaving behind an animal alone, or permitting the animal to be abandoned in circumstances that might cause them harm.

## **SECTION 22. PROHIBITION ON EAR CROPPING, TAIL DOCKING, DE-VOCALIZATION, AND DECLAWING.**

The conduct of ear cropping, tail docking, devocalization, declawing, or any other similar mutilation for aesthetic purposes or otherwise is prohibited and constitutes animal cruelty, except in cases as may be required for the well-being of the animal as determined by a duly licensed veterinarian.

When allowed, the same may only be performed by a duly licensed veterinarian.

## **SECTION 23. OPERATING AN ANIMAL FACILITY WITHOUT A PERMIT OR CERTIFICATE.**

Operating any facility without a necessary permit or certification from the Bureau is hereby prohibited.

# **CHAPTER VI ENFORCEMENT**

## **SECTION 24. IN GENERAL.**

The Bureau, either independently or in cooperation with the LGUs, registered NGOs, animal welfare enforcement officers, the PNP, and other concerned parties, is authorized to carry out enforcement operations and measures to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Act and to eradicate, stop, and prevent activities prohibited hereunder.

## **SECTION. 25. VISITORIAL/INSPECTION POWER.**

Owners and/or operators of animal facilities shall be subject to regular, as well as random, inspections by the Bureau on its own or through its deputized agencies and animal welfare enforcement officers to ensure compliance with the standards set forth under this Act and subsequent rules and regulations. Fines and suspension or revocation of certificates as provided in the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of this Act shall be imposed in case of non-compliance.

## **SECTION 26. APPREHENSION OF OFFENDING PERSON/S.**

Any person who has knowledge or information about the commission of any of the prohibited acts may refer the same to the Bureau and/or its deputized animal welfare enforcement officers, and other law enforcement agencies for appropriate action. The procedure on the filing of criminal charges shall be consistent with the Rules of Criminal Procedure contained in the Rules of Court.

#### **SECTION 27. SEIZURE OF EFFECTS.**

Pending disposition of administrative, civil, and criminal proceedings, any animals or item seized pursuant to arrests made for violations of any provision of this Act shall be held by a person, facility, or organization authorized by the Bureau, including the LGUs, law enforcement agencies, or any Bureau-accredited NGO. Animals seized shall be referred to Bureau-accredited animal facilities. For wildlife, the same shall be

referred to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB), without prejudice to the latter's referral or transfer of the animals to other suitable facilities.

Any animal seized and/or rescued from any inhumane condition or facility shall be immediately relieved from such condition or situation after the conduct of proper documentation such as photographing for purposes of preserving evidence.

#### **SECTION 28. RESCUE OF ANIMALS IN AN ENCLOSED FACILITY.**

Any animal found to have been kept, abandoned, deprived of basic care, protection, and food, or subjected to inhumane or cruel situations in an enclosed, locked, secured, or sealed facility, whether public or private, may be rescued or relieved from the cruel situation or condition, in coordination with the barangay or the law enforcement agencies or animal welfare enforcement officers/NGOs. The said enclosed facility may be broken open, subject to diligent efforts shown to contact the owner of the facility.

Except in cases where there is an imminent danger to the life of the animal, diligent effort to contact the owner of the facility may be dispensed with provided the barangay, the police, or any licensed veterinarian has certified the occurrence of such danger.

#### **SECTION 29. PROTECTION ORDERS.**

A protection order is a relief granted under this Act to prevent further violations of the provisions herein, as well as to protect an animal from further distress, fear, cruelty, or discomfort by relieving them or removing them from such inhumane condition and granting other necessary reliefs.

The protection order shall be enforced by law enforcement agencies, deputized animal welfare enforcement officers, or the Bureau.

The protection orders that may be issued under this Act are the barangay protection order (BPO), temporary protection order (TPO), and permanent protection order (PPO).

A BPO is issued by the barangay office where the perpetrator of the prohibited act or the complaining individual or entity lives or holds office. The BPO shall be effective for fifteen (15) days. A TPO shall be issued by the court having jurisdiction over the case filed against the respondent which shall last for a period of thirty (30) days. A PPO shall be issued by the appropriate court having jurisdiction over the case filed against the respondent which shall remain in effect unless revoked by the court after the dismissal of the case against the respondent.

A protection order may be sought by any concerned citizen, deputized animal welfare enforcement officer, law enforcement officer, the Bureau, or the LGU through the city/provincial veterinary officers. The protection under this Act may include any of the following reliefs:

- A. Prohibition of respondent from taking possession of the animal/s that is or was in the respondent's possession;
- B. Prohibition of respondent from taking possession of any animal for the duration of the protection order;
- C. Prohibition of respondent from purchasing any live animal for any purpose for the duration of the protection order;
- D. Directing the respondent to stay away from the person who has caused the apprehension of the respondent sought the protection order and his or her family or household member at a distance of at least fifty (50) meters or as specified in the protection order;
- E. Directing the respondent to stay away from the residence, school, place of employment, or any specified place frequented by a particular reporter, as well as such reporter's family or household member/s;
- F. Granting temporary or permanent custody of the animal to any animal welfare enforcement officer or any interested animal welfare group who applied for the custody of said animal/s;
- G. Restitution for actual costs for the rescue, care, and rehabilitation of the animal/s subject of the protection order; and,
- H. Such other forms of relief as the court deems necessary to protect any animal as well as any reporter and the reporter's designated family or household member/s.

The issuance of the BPO or the pendency of an application for BPO shall not preclude the application for or the granting of TPO or PPO. Any violation of the protection order shall be deemed as multiple violations under this Act and be penalized accordingly.

### **SECTION 30. STRATEGIC LAWSUIT AGAINST PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF THIS ACT.**

If a person believes that a legal action filed against the person constitutes a SLAPP, an assertion to that effect may be made as an affirmative defense in the action. A special hearing on the SLAPP affirmative defense shall be held by the court at the earliest possible juncture. The hearing on the SLAPP affirmative defense shall be summary in nature and shall be resolved within thirty (30) days after the summary hearing.

If the court dismisses the action pursuant to the SLAPP affirmative defense, it may award attorney's fees and costs of suit, as well as damages under a counterclaim if such has been filed. The dismissal shall be with prejudice.

If the court rejects the SLAPP affirmative defense, the evidence adduced during the summary hearing shall be treated as evidence of the parties on the merits of the case.

The action shall proceed in accordance with the Rules of Court.

### **SECTION 31. DISPUTABLE PRESUMPTION.**

If, at the time of apprehension, a person lacks the appropriate permit, certification, clearance, or authority issued by the Bureau or other pertinent government agencies including a duly licensed local government veterinarian, the following shall constitute prima facie evidence of the corresponding illegal acts punishable under this Act:

- A. The possession of a body, carcass, or any part thereof, meat of any animals prohibited to be killed, whether raw, cooked or processed, other than those allowed under existing laws on food animals, without justification or necessary permit or certificate from the Bureau, LGU veterinarian, the NMIS, or local slaughterhouses showing the reasons and method used for the killing, as well as the purpose for which the carcass is to be used, is a presumption that the animals were killed under circumstances prohibited under this Act. When such possession includes the possession of any paraphernalia used for killing, torture, or maltreatment such as clubs, knife, cages, restraints, along with live or dead animals including any of its products and derivatives, there shall be a disputable presumption that the possessor caused the killing, destruction, infliction of injury, or maltreatment, as appropriate;

- B. The presence of fresh and/or dried blood, by-products, or derivatives of the animals, with or without the tools, equipment, and/or paraphernalia derivatives, shall be a disputable presumption of the killing and/or destruction of the habitat of the animal involved.

## **CHAPTER VII PERMITS, CERTIFICATES, AND AUTHORITY TO COLLECT FEES AND CHARGES**

### **SECTION 32. CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION.**

No person, association, partnership, corporation, cooperative, or any government agency or instrumentality shall establish, maintain, or operate any animal facility or transport facility, public or private, without first securing a certificate of registration from the Bureau. Any public or private facility shall be considered as operating an animal facility, and subject to the guidelines and requirements of this Act, when the following circumstances are present: (a) When operating and representing itself publicly as such; and (b) When it has been securing donations or effecting rescue under the definition of this Act.

The Bureau shall provide ample and reasonable time for any person, association, partnership, corporation, cooperative, or any government agency or instrumentality to register any animal facility, with due consideration of their scale and financial resources.

The Bureau may revoke or cancel the Certificate Of Registration of an animal facility that is found to be in violation of any provision of this Act or any associated guidelines, rules, regulations, or standards. The facility may file with the Bureau a request for reconsideration within fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of the notice of revocation or cancellation of certificate. The Bureau shall resolve the same with finality within fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of the request.

### **SECTION 33. MAYOR'S PERMIT REQUIREMENT.**

No LGU shall issue a mayor's or business permit to any person, association, partnership, corporation, cooperative, government agency or instrumentality without the presentation of a certificate coming from the Bureau that it has complied with the animal welfare standards set forth herein or any rules and regulations hereafter enforced.

## **CHAPTER VIII OTHER ANIMAL WELFARE PROVISIONS**

### **SECTION 34. USE OF ANIMALS FOR SHOW, MEDIA, TV, MOVIES, OR ENTERTAINMENT.**

Promoters/organizers of animal shows, media, or entertainment, shall obtain the necessary permit from the Bureau when using animals. The presence of a licensed veterinarian during the entire show, taping, shooting, or program shall be required. The Bureau shall lay down requirements for this purpose. All other provisions regarding proper care and treatment of animals, in general, shall be applicable to animals used for show or entertainment, especially with respect to transport, holding area, allowance for rest, and provision of food and water.

It shall be unlawful for producers and promoters of shows where animals are used to import, procure, or use animals from sources without animal welfare standards and/or that have been shown to have maltreated or exposed animals to inhumane conditions prior to their importation. The animal shall be given sufficient food and accommodation, as well as adequate rest, for the entire duration of its stay in the Philippines.

### **SECTION 35. USE OF ANIMALS FOR WORK.**

Animals used for work, including but not limited to carriage horses, farm animals, and the like, must comply with the health and welfare standards set forth herein and as issued by the Bureau, taking into consideration their nature and behavior. Working animals should not be allowed to work under circumstances where their health and safety will be at risk. Overworking of animals is hereby prohibited.

Water and appropriate shelter protecting the animals from extreme weather conditions must be provided.

### **SECTION 36. GUIDE/SERVICE ANIMALS.**

Service animals, such as but not limited to guide/service dogs and police or K9 dogs, shall be defined and regulated by the Bureau.

Certification guidelines and standards for the accreditation of service/guide animals shall be established by the Bureau in consultation with relevant agencies and concerned groups.

### **SECTION 37. USE OF ANIMALS IN RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC STUDY.**

Animals used in scientific procedures, research, and studies shall be regulated by the Bureau, ensuring that animal welfare regulations and guidelines in the use, experimentation, testing, and manipulation of animals for said purpose are complied with at all times.

### **SECTION 38. FARM ANIMALS.**

The Bureau, in consultation with the stakeholders, shall set out standards and guidelines in the establishment and gradual compliance with animal welfare standards to improve the living and health condition of animals in the farm industry.

## **SECTION 39. TRANSPORTATION OF ANIMALS.**

The following stipulations shall be followed when transporting animals:

- A. No person shall transport or cause an animal to be transported in a way likely to cause its injury or undue suffering, including but not limited to overcrowding, lack of adequate ventilation and appropriate transport cages, unnecessary or painful restraint, improper and unsafe stowing, transport during extreme weather and other similar conditions, as well as failure to adequately provide food and water for the transported animals.
- B. Any person transporting an animal in connection with an economic activity shall:
  - 1. Ensure that such animal is fit to travel and checked regularly at least once every six (6) hours during the voyage;
  - 2. Protect such animals from extreme temperatures, with journeys limited as to the duration prescribed by the Bureau depending on the species, nature, and needs of the transported animal;
  - 3. Ensure that vehicle loading and unloading facilities are constructed and maintained to avoid injury and suffering;
  - 4. Provide sufficient floor space and height allowance to allow the animal to lie down, stand up, fully stretch its limbs, and turn around freely without any impediment;
  - 5. After each eight (8) hour travel period, allow the animal to rest off the vehicle for at least twenty-four (24) hours, providing it with sufficient water and food; and
  - 6. Prioritize/use the route with the shortest distance.

For purposes of this section, transport “in connection with an economic activity” includes but is not limited to journeys undertaken by commercial haulers and animal breeders, farmers, and horse racers. Such transport is not limited to one where an immediate exchange of money, goods, or services takes place and includes, in particular, transport that directly or indirectly involves or aims at financial gain.

- C. No person shall transport an animal younger than eight (8) weeks old, a pregnant female who has passed through ninety percent (90%) of her expected gestational period, a female who has given birth in the past seven (7) days, or a sick or injured animal, unless such transport is to or from a veterinary practice or clinic;
- D. Any violation of this section shall be penalized even if the transporter has a permit to transport from the Bureau; and

- E. Any vehicle used in the transportation or importation/exportation of animals in violation of the provisions of this Act shall be deemed an instrument employed in the commission of the crime and shall be ordered confiscated and forfeited in favor of the government upon conviction of the accused.

#### **SECTION 40. IMPORT AND EXPORT OF LIVE ANIMALS.**

For the import and/or export of live animals, compliance with the provisions of this Act, including the provision of holding facilities must be ensured. Importation of animals from countries of extremely cold climates shall be prohibited unless specifically authorized on a case-to-case basis by the Bureau upon submission of an approved care and sustainability program or plan.

#### **SECTION 41. SPAY AND NEUTER AND VACCINATION OF STRAY CATS AND DOGS.**

The LGUs shall implement a mandatory spay and neuter for stray dogs and cats to control animal strays and rabies. The Bureau may come up with other relevant and necessary dog/cat population control programs. Pest control companies shall not be allowed to capture and dispose of cats and/or dogs. To ensure commitment by the LGUs, the implementation of this section shall be part of their Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) assessment system.

#### **SECTION 42. COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, AND OTHER PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS.**

The Bureau, together with other agencies, NGOs, and stakeholders, shall implement programs towards increasing animal welfare awareness through education and various information awareness activities and programs.

### **CHAPTER IX PENALTIES**

#### **SECTION 43. PROHIBITED ACTS AND PENALTIES.**

In addition to the other provisions of this Act, the following acts are prohibited and shall have the corresponding penalties:

- A. Any person who subjects any animal to cruelty, torture, maltreatment, or any of the prohibited acts herein shall be punished with a penalty of imprisonment ranging from one (1) year and six (6) months to three (3) years and a fine of not less than Thirty Thousand Pesos (P30,000.00) but not more than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00);

- B. Abandonment of animals shall be punished with a penalty of imprisonment ranging from six (6) months to one (1) year, and a fine not exceeding Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00). If the animal is left in circumstances likely to cause the animal unnecessary suffering or if the abandonment results in the death or injury of the animal, the person liable shall suffer the maximum penalty of imprisonment of one (1) year and a fine of Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00);
- C. Operating an animal facility, including an animal transport facility, without the required permit shall be punished with a penalty of imprisonment ranging from six (6) months to one (1) year and a fine not exceeding Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00). The penalties imposed herein are without prejudice to the administrative liability of the owner/operator;
- D. Failure to obtain the required permits to use animals for show, entrainment, or any form of media, or for research and/or scientific education experiment shall be punished with a penalty of imprisonment ranging from six (6) months to one (1) year and six (6) months and a fine not exceeding Thirty Thousand Pesos (P30,000.00);
- E. If the violation is committed by a juridical person, the offender responsible therefor shall be punished with the corresponding penalty of imprisonment. If the violation is committed by an alien, he/she shall be immediately deported after the service of sentence without any further proceeding;
- F. The penalty of imprisonment ranging from two (2) years and one (1) day to three (3) years and a fine not exceeding Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (P250,000.00), shall be imposed if the offense involves any of the following circumstances:
1. Committed by a syndicate involving a group of three (3) or more individuals;
  2. Committed by an offender who makes a business out of cruelty to animals;
  3. Committed by a public officer or employee; or
  4. Where at least three (3) animals are involved;
- G. In any of the foregoing situations, the offender shall suffer subsidiary imprisonment in case of insolvency and the inability to pay fine;
- H. The maximum applicable penalty shall be imposed upon a person who, at the time of his/her trial for a violation of this Act, has been previously convicted by final judgment for the same offense or for another violation of this Act;

- I. Any person found guilty of dog meat trading shall be punished with a penalty of imprisonment ranging from one (1) year to four (4) years and a fine not exceeding Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) per dog;
- J. Any violation of any other provision of this Act shall be punished with a penalty of imprisonment ranging from three (3) months to one (1) year and a fine not exceeding Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00);
- K. The liability of any person herein is without prejudice to his/her criminal, civil, or administrative liability for any other offense under another law;
- L. Any person who has been habitually convicted of a violation of this Act shall be permanently and perpetually disqualified from being issued any permit or certificate to operate any animal facility, including owning or possessing an animal/pet;
- M. The court may, in its discretion, require that the imposed penalties of imprisonment not exceeding one (1) year be served by the defendant by rendering community service under such terms and conditions that the court may determine depending on the gravity of the offense.

Under this circumstance, the court shall prepare an order imposing the penalty of community service in lieu of imprisonment, specifying the required number of hours and the period for its completion. Community service to be rendered must be related to assistance to animals.

## **CHAPTER X APPROPRIATION**

### **SECTION 44. APPROPRIATION.**

The initial funding to establish the Bureau shall be taken from the general appropriations of the DA to the extent of the amount of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) for the first year.

The subsequent funding shall be included in the General Appropriation Act which shall include all necessary amounts to achieve the purposes of this Act and to ensure the proper functioning of the Bureau, including the enforcement of this Act.

## **CHAPTER XI MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

### **SECTION 45. ANIMAL WELFARE FUND.**

There is hereby established an Animal Welfare Fund to be administered by the Bureau as a special account in the National Treasury.

It shall finance the programs of the Bureau on animal welfare and enforcement process. The Fund shall be derived from fines imposed and damages awarded pursuant to violations of this Act; fees charged for permits, registrations, or authorizations; administrative fees; or donations, endowments, or grants in the form of contributions. Contributions to the fund shall be exempt from donor's tax and all other taxes, charges, or fees imposed by the government.

#### **SECTION 46. MANDATORY ANIMAL WELFARE EDUCATION.**

It shall be mandatory for all primary and secondary schools, public and private, to integrate in their curriculum and have activities on the following:

- A. The promotion and protection of animal welfare;
- B. Responsible pet ownership; and
- C. Concept of animal welfare.

#### **SECTION 47. EMERGENCY RESPONSE.**

The Bureau shall create and implement, in collaboration with the LGUs and animal welfare NGOs, an inter-agency emergency response program for rescuing and caring for animals in times of calamity including but not limited to floods and earthquakes. Such program shall include the establishment and placing of animals in identified animal evacuation centers, temporary shelters, and/or recognized rescue centers, whether public or private, until the same is claimed by their rightful owners or can be re-homed appropriately.

The Bureau, through the LGUs, shall likewise establish an emergency response system to rescue and/or refer animals that are victims of abuse, cruelty, and maltreatment to recognized animal shelters or facilities, whether public or private.

#### **SECTION 48. CUSTODY OF RESCUED ANIMALS.**

Animal/s seized or rescued from violators of this Act and its guidelines, rules, and regulations may be held in custody and referred to local government pound or shelter, or Bureau-accredited animal facilities pending disposition of administrative, civil, or criminal proceedings. For wildlife, the same shall be referred to the DENR-BMB or its nearest regional offices.

#### **SECTION 49. ROLE OF LGUS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES.**

The LGUs shall support the Bureau in the implementation of this Act by issuing necessary animal welfare ordinances and implementing animal welfare programs in coordination with the Bureau, including the provision of veterinary access and the conduct of mandatory spay and neutering to control dog and cat populations. Other government agencies handling animals shall adopt and implement animal welfare standards, policies, rules, and regulations in their operations consistent with this Act.

Barangays shall create their own Animal Welfare Task Force and adopt programs consistent with the provisions of this Act and its IRR.

#### **SECTION 50. STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.**

This Act shall be liberally construed in favor of the promotion and protection of animal welfare.

#### **SECTION 51. TRANSITION PERIOD.**

During the transition period, within one (1) year from effectivity hereof, the existing BAI shall remain to be the supervisory and regulatory authority in the implementation of the provisions of this Act and shall manage, supervise turnover, and monitor the establishment of the Bureau until the same becomes operational. It shall ensure including the assignment and appointment of necessary personnel and staff during the transition.

#### **SECTION 52. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE.**

If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other portions or provisions not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

#### **SECTION 53. REPEALING CLAUSE.**

All laws, decrees, rules, and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

#### **SECTION 54. EFFECTIVITY.**

This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

*Approved,*