

Missouri State Senate

Introduced

SB 832 - This act creates the Large Carnivore Act. Except as permitted in the act, the act prohibits the owning, breeding, possession, transferring of ownership, or transporting of "large carnivores," defined as certain non-native cats of the Felidae family or any species of non-native bear held in captivity.

Persons possessing, breeding, or transporting large carnivores on or after January 1, 2012 must apply for a permit for each such large carnivore from the Department of Agriculture. The fee for the permit shall not exceed \$2,500 and the permit shall list certain information about the location, identification, and veterinary care of the large carnivore. The veterinarian identified in the permit must: insert an identification number in the animal via subcutaneous microchip, collect a DNA sample, provide a written summary of the animal's physical exam, and provide a signed health certificate as required for transport of the animal. The department may charge up to \$500 for annual renewal of the permit. Certain individuals are ineligible for a permit.

The act provides requirements for any person who owns, possesses, breeds or sells a large carnivore, which include making the animal's permit or federal license available for inspection, posting signage on the animal's property, criteria for the animal's humane confinement and care, and limitations on the animal's physical contact with other people. Certain veterinarians as approved by the Department of Agriculture must attest to the proper care of the large carnivore on a regular basis as determined by the department and must also be informed in the event of the animal's death.

A person may kill a large carnivore without civil liability if the person believes the carnivore is attacking or killing another person, livestock, or a mammalian pet, if the pet is being attacked outside the large carnivore's enclosure.

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.

Individuals who intentionally release a large carnivore shall be guilty of a Class D felony.

Other violations of this act shall be a Class A misdemeanor. The penalty for violating the act may also include community service, loss of privilege to own or possess an animal, and civil forfeiture of any large carnivore.

The requirements of the act are in addition to any applicable state or federal laws and do not preclude any political subdivision from adopting more restrictive laws. Certain entities, law enforcement officials, animal control officers, and veterinarians are exempt from the permit and ID chip requirements of the act. The act does not apply to circuses or to the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

This act is almost identical to HCS/HB 426 (2009) and is similar to SB 206 (2007) and the perfected HB 1441 (2006).

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