

Date of Hearing: May 3, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher, Chair

AB 1137 (Maienschein) – As Amended April 20, 2017

Policy Committee: Housing and Community Development                      Vote: 7 - 0

Urgency: No                      State Mandated Local Program: No                      Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:** This bill requires housing developments financed through the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to authorize a resident of a housing development to own one or more common household pets. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Provides that HCD shall require each housing development financed on or after January 1, 2018, to authorize a resident of the housing development to own or maintain one or more common household pets within the resident's unit, subject to applicable state laws, department regulations and local government ordinances related to public health, animal control, and animal anticruelty.
- 2) Defines "common household pet" as a domesticated animal, such as a dog or cat that is commonly kept in the home for pleasure rather than for commercial purposes.
- 3) Specifies that nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or otherwise affect other statutes or laws that require reasonable accommodations for an individual with a disability who maintains an animal to provide assistance, service, or support.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

Minor and absorbable costs to HCD.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author "AB 1137 would make future housing developments financed by HCD pet-friendly. HCD is responsible for the allocation of the majority of funding provided by the state for the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing. While the housing produced by HCD financing varies annually, in recent years, the Department has financed an average of nearly 6,000 housing units per year. By making this housing pet-friendly, thousands of households wouldn't be faced with the difficult decision of giving up their pet. A pet friendly policy could be implemented with the de minimis cost and disruption, but would have extraordinary benefits for families struggling to keep their pets. The law would build on precedent provided by HUD in providing pet-friendly housing."
- 2) **Background.** The high cost of housing has had a growing impact on families with pets. A lack of pet friendly housing options has put some pet owners in a position of choosing between keeping their household pet or keeping a roof over their head. In Los Angeles, county shelters are filled past capacity with approximately 170,000 animals being taken

every year. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Safety Net program recently found that over 30,000 dogs and cats are in Los Angeles shelters because their families surrendered them due to problems with housing.

Contributing to this problem is the increase in financial evictions across the state. This trend is especially pronounced in high cost housing markets. This puts emotional strain on families and burdens county shelters. A lack of pet friendly housing options is regularly cited as a reason that families relinquish their pet to local shelters.

The benefits provided by pets are consistent with goals to holistically address the social, economic, and health outcomes for residents of affordable housing. Not only does pet friendly housing promote happier and healthier families, but it reduces the financial burden to shelters and the public.

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