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## **S.F. No. 3542 – Office of Animal Protection**

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**Section 1** is a legislative findings and purpose clause. The finding is that animal cruelty is linked to human violence and criminal activity, and the purpose is to address animal cruelty in a more comprehensive and centralized manner by creating an Office of Animal Protection.

**Section 2** defines terms for the purposes of the bill.

**Section 3, subd. 1** creates the Office of Animal Protection within the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

**Subd. 2** lists the powers and duties of the Office of Animal Protection.

**Subd. 3** requires the director of the office to submit an annual report to the legislature.

**Section 4, subdivision 1** directs the commissioner of public safety to establish and appoint an Office of Animal Protection advisory committee to provide assistance and advice to the office in the development and execution of its duties, including outreach to communities and stakeholders.

**Subd. 2** provides that advisory committee members as a whole must possess knowledge and experience in the following disciplines:

- investigations;
- prosecution;
- forensic veterinary medicine;
- animal care, transport, and housing; and
- human welfare, as it relates to offenders or victims of animal cruelty.

The committee shall also include members of the public with knowledge of animal law and animal cruelty.

**Subd. 3** authorizes the advisory committee to establish subcommittees to identify and make recommendations on specific topics related to animal cruelty and effective enforcement efforts of animal cruelty statutes.

**Section 5** requires the commissioner of public safety to appoint an office director with knowledge in criminal law, knowledge of the many facets of animal cruelty, and knowledge of the disciplines involved in the protection of animals, as well as planning and communication skills. Authorizes the director to hire additional staff to assist in performing the duties of the office.

**Section 6** authorizes the director to enter into contracts with parties to assist with fulfilling the office's powers and duties.

**Section 7, subdivisions 1 and 2** create an animal protection account in the special revenue fund and authorize the director to accept monetary gifts, grants or contributions to be deposited in the account.

**Subd. 3** authorizes the commissioner of public safety to make grants from the animal protection account to state and local units of government and nonprofit organizations to promote animal protection efforts.

**Section 8** includes felony convictions for cruelty to animals under chapter 343 in the definition of "crime of violence" under section 624.712, subdivision 5.

**Section 9** appropriates \$350,000 in fiscal year 2025 from the general fund to the commissioner of public safety to establish and operate the office.