



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

Senate Passes Bill to Develop Training and Certification Program for Animal Control Officers

STEPHEN M. SALAND May 21, 2012

The New York State Senate today passed a bill (S.2490D) to implement a training, examination, and certification program for animal control officers. The certification program, to be developed by Agriculture and Markets and the Department of Education, would be available to localities that choose to require animal control officers take the training program.

In 2008, an untrained animal control officer working in Lackawanna, N.Y. shot and killed a cat and two kittens in a basement of an apartment complex after being called to retrieve the animals. The officer was charged with felony animal cruelty after the shooting amid public outrage at the incident.

The case brought to the forefront the lack of qualifications and training on the part of animal control officers throughout the state. The lack of education and training often means these officers will not make the proper animal control decisions when responding to calls.

The training program would include the scope and responsibilities of animal control officers; appropriate and humane handling of animals; evaluation of animal cruelty and abuse; laws and rules regarding search and seizure; strategies to ensure that abused animals are separated from their abusers, as well as other legal and humane components.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.