



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Bill to Permit Pets on Public Transit During States of Emergency or Evacuations Approved by State Senate WITH Addabbo's Support

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR June 16, 2015

| ISSUE: **GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

Queens, NY (June 16, 2015): Noting that many residents were reluctant to leave their pets behind when they were asked to flee their homes during Hurricane Sandy, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. recently joined with his Senate colleagues to approve a bill (S.3321) that would allow companion animals to board Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) vehicles during states of emergency or times of evacuation.

“People risked their own lives during Hurricane Sandy because they didn’t want to abandon their beloved pets, who were and are members of their families,” said Addabbo. “This caused severe challenges on many fronts – endangering people who wouldn’t evacuate, making an already difficult job even harder for first responders, and causing a great deal of stress and heartache for all involved. Permitting pet owners to take their animals with them on buses, subways and trains during emergencies would help to address these issues.”

Under the bill, domestic animals permitted on MTA transit would need to be leashed, tethered, or in an appropriate carrier, and exceptions could be made if there is “reasonable cause” to believe that allowing the animal to board could cause a health or safety hazard. Under the New York State Pet Evacuation and Sheltering Act of 2006 (PETS ACT), the State’s

disaster preparedness plans must include programs to assist household pets and service animals in the event of an emergency. This proposal seeks to fulfill this goal, and is also a counterpart to similar legislation approved by the State of New Jersey in 2013 to address related bi-state Port Authority of New York and New Jersey animal transportation issues.

“In the aftermath of Sandy, I deeply appreciated the work of local animal rescue groups in their attempts to shelter pets that became homeless as a result of the storm and to reunite lost animals with their worried owners,” said Addabbo. “Providing pet owners with the opportunity to take their dogs, cats and other domestic animals with them during emergencies and evacuations makes good and compassionate sense on any number of levels.”

In the Assembly, the bill is under review by the Committee on Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions.

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