

SENATE ECONOMIC GROWTH COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1803

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 16, 2023

The Senate Economic Growth Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1803.

As reported, this bill prohibits a person from performing, or causing to be performed, an onychectomy (declawing) or flexor tendonectomy procedure by any means on a cat or other animal, unless the procedure is deemed necessary for a therapeutic purpose by a licensed veterinarian. Any person who violates this provision would be guilty of a disorderly persons offense, which is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000, a term of imprisonment of up to six months, or both. A violator would also be subject to a civil penalty of between \$500 and \$2,000.

Under the bill, whenever a licensed veterinarian determines that an onychectomy or flexor tendonectomy is necessary for a therapeutic purpose, the veterinarian would be required to file a written statement with the Department of Health, and provide a copy of that statement to the owner of the animal. A veterinarian who fails to comply with this provision would be subject to disciplinary action by the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners.

For purposes of the bill, the term “therapeutic purpose” means for purpose of necessity to address the medical condition of the animal, such as an existing or recurring illness, infection, disease, injury, or abnormal condition in a claw that compromises the animal’s health. “Therapeutic purpose” would not include cosmetic or aesthetic reasons or reasons of convenience in keeping or handling the animal.