

**131st Maine State Legislature
Addendum
Legislative Council
Requests to Introduce Legislation
First Special Session**

Actions Taken After April 26, 2023

SPONSOR: Rep. Erin R. Sheehan

<u>LR #</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Action</u>
2560	An Act to Establish the Animal Law Response Team	

Animal Law Response Team (ALERT)

1. **Response Team established.** Animal Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT) is established to provide a coalition of trained professionals to assist with and enhance the enforcement of Maine Animal laws either by consultation or physical response.
2. **Membership.** Members must include at least the following:
 - a. One member representing Maine Chiefs of Police Association;
 - b. One member representing Maine Sheriffs Association;
 - c. One member representing Maine Prosecutors Association;
 - d. One member representing Maine Animal Control Association.
3. **Consultants; experts.** Whenever it considers appropriate, the response team shall seek the advice of consultants or experts based on a case-by-case basis in fields related to its duties.
4. **Terms; vacancies.** A member is appointed for a term of 2 years and may be reappointed. In the case of a vacancy for any reason, the existing members shall appoint a member representing the same interest to fill the unexpired term.
5. **Meetings; officers.** The response team shall call the first meeting before January 1, 2024. The response team shall organize initially and annually thereafter by electing a chair and a vice chair from among its members. The vice chair shall also serve as secretary. The response team shall meet at such time or times as may be reasonably necessary to carry out its duties, but it shall meet at least twice a year at such place and time as the panel determines and it shall meet at the call of the chair.
6. **Funding.** During the period of any assignment to the Animal Law Enforcement Response Team other than any regular scheduled meetings, the member's full time department will remain responsible for establishing the salary and benefits, including overtime, of the officer(s) assigned to the animal case and for making all payments. Donations may be made to particular animal case(s) if requested by donor and if there is no specification the donated funds will be allocated as reimbursement to departments of those involved in a case.
7. **Duties.** The response team shall:
 - a. At the request of a Maine municipality, Animal Control Officer, or law enforcement agency the response team may provide guidance and support for animal cases that involve a large number of animals, safety concerns, or are complex in nature.
 - b. Identify ways to assist municipalities, Animal Control Officers, or law enforcement agencies with the identification and handling of animal cases.

- c. Identify ways to assist with the prosecution of animal cases, including promoting the prompt holding of a full hearing regarding possession of the animal(s) in accordance with Title 17, section 1021, subsection 3, and seeking petitions for the posting of a security in accordance with Title 17, section 1027.
- d. Enable streamline reporting of animal cruelty to local law enforcement agencies for immediate documentation and assessment.
- e. Law enforcement agents serving on the task force may be deputized and utilized if requested and there is not an acting agent for the municipality in the jurisdiction of the animal case or in the event the Animal Control Officer for the municipality does not serve the capacity to issue a Title 17, criminal summons.
- f. Identify ways to develop standards of education and training of Maine animal law for law enforcement and animal control officers.

STATE OF MAINE

KATHRYN SLATTERY
DISTRICT I

JACQUELINE SARTORIS
DISTRICT II

NEIL MCLEAN
DISTRICT III

MAEGHAN MALONEY
DISTRICT IV



R. CHRISTOPHER ALMY
DISTRICT V

NATASHA IRVING
DISTRICT VI

ROBERT GRANGER
DISTRICT VII

TODD R. COLLINS
DISTRICT VIII

MAINE PROSECUTORS ASSOCIATION
SHIRA BURNS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 27, 2023

Representative Erin Sheehan
House District 132 (Biddeford)
PO Box 1423
Biddeford, Maine 04005

Animal Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT)

Dear Representative Sheehan,

On behalf of the Maine Prosecutors Association, I wanted to reach out in support of the idea of establishing an Animal Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT). This idea is a robust and cost effective measure to support our front line officers with a resource when in the middle of an emergency that deals with any of our animal laws. Having a team of specialized professionals that can assist law enforcement in the moment when making difficult decisions, will lead to the best result for any victim of a crime, the owner of the animal, the animal themselves, and our communities.

We look forward to working on this comprehensive idea and thank Officer Parker for her communication and collaboration on establishing an Animal Law Enforcement Response Team.

Thanks,

Shira S. Burns

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Maine Prosecutors Association
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