

RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 178 (HB 834)

2026 Regular Session

McMahon

New law authorizes a local governmental subdivision to designate an animal shelter to provide sheltering services for lost, stray, unowned, and at-large domestic animals within its respective jurisdiction. Authorizes a designated animal shelter to be owned or operated by a local governmental subdivision, private entity, nonprofit organization, licensed veterinarian, or any other entity reasonably competent to provide sheltering services.

New law requires a designated shelter to comply with state and local laws pertaining to animal shelters and gives full discretion to a local governmental subdivision to do the following: select, contract with, or operate a shelter; determine the scope of services provided; enter into cooperative agreements with other local governmental subdivisions; adopt other local standards or ordinances; establish longer holding periods by local ordinance; and revoke any designations.

New law authorizes a designated animal shelter to acquire sole ownership of animals under certain conditions. Requires a designated animal shelter to comply with all applicable state and local laws, regulations, or ordinances regarding hold periods. Further establishes a hold period of at least three days, exclusive of legal public holidays, only if no hold period is established by a parish or municipality.

New law requires a designated shelter during the hold period to make diligent efforts to identify and notify the owner, including scanning for a microchip or any other identifying or registration information, including tattoos or collars with tags, at least twice and 24 hours apart, and maintain records for at least one year. Further requires the shelter to maintain continuous or constructive possession and to make the animal or its photograph and description available for public viewing. Additionally, requires fosters to return the animal to the shelter upon request unless the hold period expires or ownership is transferred. Provides that if the animal remains unclaimed after the hold period and notification efforts, the local governmental subdivision or designated shelter acquires ownership and may transfer it to another person or entity. Authorizes a designated shelter to transfer ownership with or to a rescue organization.

New law clarifies that nothing in new law requires any local governmental subdivision to do the following: designate an animal shelter; alter or impair existing laws, regulations, or ordinances in place that authorize a shelter to acquire immediate ownership of an animal by abandonment, transfer, relinquishment, or any other lawful means; create a statewide regulatory licensing scheme for animal shelters; or increase the financial burden on local governmental subdivisions. Exempts a local governmental subdivision or designated shelter, or any officer or employee of either, from being subject to civil damages arising from their actions taken in good faith, except those that constitute gross negligence or willful misconduct.

New law requires that it be construed to promote humane treatment of animals, preserve local governmental flexibility, and avoid unnecessary regulatory burden.

Effective August 1, 2026.

(Adds R.S. 3:2467)