

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1258 (Substitute for House Bill No. 662 by Representative Geymann)

BY REPRESENTATIVES GEYMANN AND VENTRELLA

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 56:126.1, relative to the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries; to provide for
3 the disposition of sick, injured or orphaned wildlife species seized as a result of
4 unlawful possession; to establish a preference for release, rehabilitation, and
5 placement with licensed facilities; to provide for euthanasia only when no feasible
6 alternatives exist and under specified circumstances; and to provide for related
7 matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 56:126.1 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 §126.1. Disposition of wildlife seized for unlawful possession; euthanasia

11 A. This Section shall be applicable to any wildlife held in violation of R.S.
12 56:126 that is seized by the department for unlawful possession. For purposes of this
13 Section, wildlife seized by the department shall be referred to as "contraband
14 wildlife".

15 B. Contraband wildlife shall be evaluated by department field staff or by a
16 veterinarian to determine the appropriate disposition.

17 C. The department shall dispose of contraband wildlife in accordance with
18 the following order of preference:

19 (1) If the contraband wildlife is clinically healthy, past the age of
20 independence, and release of the species into the wild is not prohibited by law or
21 regulation, the department shall release the wildlife into a suitable habitat.

1 (2) If the contraband wildlife is sick, injured, or otherwise not immediately
2 releasable, but is capable of being rehabilitated, the department shall place the
3 wildlife with a wildlife rehabilitator permitted by the department who is authorized
4 to possess the species and who is willing to accept the wildlife. Wildlife placed with
5 a rehabilitator shall remain in the rehabilitator's possession until it can be released
6 to the wild or until the rehabilitator, in consultation with the department, determines
7 that further rehabilitation is not feasible. A rehabilitator shall notify the department
8 prior to euthanizing any wildlife placed in his care pursuant to this Paragraph.

9 (3) If the contraband wildlife is medically nonreleasable or is determined to
10 be nonreleasable due to habituation to life in captivity or rehabilitation would pose
11 a risk to public health or be deemed inappropriate due to an animal's temperament
12 and risk of injury to the animal or humans, the department shall make every
13 reasonable effort to place the wildlife with a zoo, aquarium, sanctuary, educational
14 institution as appropriate, or other facility that is licensed or otherwise authorized to
15 possess the species under state or federal law.

16 (4) Euthanization of contraband wildlife shall only be performed as a last
17 resort. The department may euthanize contraband wildlife only if one or more of the
18 following applies:

19 (a) None of the preferred options provided in this Subsection is viable or
20 available for the wildlife.

21 (b) The wildlife exhibits clinical signs of disease.

22 (c) The wildlife has sustained a life-threatening injury.

23 (d) Release or rehabilitation of the species is prohibited by law or regulation
24 and no licensed facility described in Paragraph (C)(3) of this Section is willing,
25 authorized, or appropriate to accept the wildlife.

26 (e) The state wildlife veterinarian, or Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
27 departmental veterinarian has determined that euthanasia is in the best interest of the
28 animal.

1 D. Any euthanasia performed pursuant to this Section shall be conducted in
2 accordance with the most current edition of the American Veterinary Medical
3 Association: Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____