

MEMORANDUM

DATE	October 1, 2026
TO	California Veterinary Medical Board (Board)
FROM	Justin Sotelo, Policy Specialist
SUBJECT	Agenda Item 6. Update, Discussion, and Possible Action on 2026 Legislation Impacting the Board, DCA, and/or the Veterinary Profession

Legislation is amended, statuses are updated, and analyses are added frequently; thus, hyperlinks, identified in [blue, underlined text](#), are provided throughout this document to ensure Board members and the public have access to the most up-to-date information. The information below was based on legislation, statuses, and analyses (if any) publicly available on **September 24, 2026**.

A. Implementation Plan for Chaptered 2026 Legislation

1. Assembly Bill (AB) [1733](#) (Lee, Chapter 42, Statutes of 2026) License and Registration Renewal: Continuing Education Board Position: **Support**

Status: Approved by Governor / Filed with Secretary of State – June 30, 2026

Analysis: 6/16/26 – Senate Floor
5/29/26 – Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee
4/27/26 – Assembly Appropriations Committee
4/10/26 – Assembly Business and Professions Committee

Summary: Currently, veterinarians are required to complete 36 hours of continuing education (CE) credit for license renewal, and Registered Veterinary Technicians (RVTs) are required to complete 20 hours of CE for registration renewal.

As part of the 36 hours, a veterinarian may earn up to six hours combined by taking up to six hours of self-study courses or providing up to four hours of pro bono spay and neuter services, as specified. (Business and Professions Code (BPC), § [4858.1](#), subd. (b)(2).)

Similarly, RVTs may earn up to four hours combined by taking up to four hours of self-study courses or providing up to two hours of animal health care tasks related to spay and neuter services, as specified. (BPC, § [4858.2](#), subd. (b)(2).)

This bill reorganizes the veterinarian and RVT CE statutes to eliminate the combined six-hour cap for self-study courses and pro bono spay and neuter services. Instead, the bill allows a veterinarian to complete up to six hours of self-study courses and up to four hours of spay and neuter services (up to a total of 10 CE hours of the 36 hours required for license renewal).

The bill also allows an RVT to complete up to four hours of self-study courses and up to two hours of spay and neuter services (up to a total of six CE hours of the 20 hours required for registration renewal).

In addition, the bill strikes “pro bono” and adds “at no cost to” the listed shelters where spay and neuter services may be performed to qualify for CE credit. These amendments allow the licensee/registrant to claim CE credit while performing spay and neuter services for which the licensee/registrant could be paid, instead of authorizing spay/neuter CE credit for performing these services for free.

According to the bill sponsor (California Animal Welfare Association [CalAnimals]), this is intended to make it clear the organization receiving the benefit is not charged for the veterinarian’s or RVT’s spay/neuter services. The sponsors are not concerned with veterinarians or RVTs being paid by a third party.

With that said, the sponsor believes reorganizing the CE hours to strike the six-hour CE hour cap language and revising the spay and neuter service CE credit from pro bono services to possibly paid services provides more incentive for veterinarians and RVTs to provide the services, as long as the shelter or rescue group were provided the services at no cost.

Implementation: The Board will update its CE guidance content and create and post a newsletter summarizing the new CE allowances. The newsletter will clarify the separate limits for self-study and spay/neuter CE hours, explain that services performed “at no cost to” shelters may qualify even if paid by a third party, and remind licensees that these changes expand CE flexibility while remaining subject to renewal compliance requirements.

2. AB [1999](#) (Kalra, Chapter 205, Statutes of 2026) Veterinary Medicine
Board Position: [Support](#)

Status: Approved by Governor / Filed with Secretary of State –
September 15, 2026

Analysis: 8/19/26 – Assembly Floor
8/10/26 – Senate Floor
7/1/26 – Senate Floor
6/26/26 – Senate Appropriations Committee
6/12/26 – Senate Business, Professions and Economic
Development Committee
5/1/26 – Assembly Floor
4/27/26 – Assembly Appropriations Committee
4/10/26 – Assembly Business and Professions Committee

Summary: This bill changes California’s veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) provisions from applying to “condition-specific” to “patient-specific.” California law currently requires a veterinarian to examine an animal for each condition treated in order to establish a valid VCPR. In other states, a VCPR may be established through an examination of the patient within a defined timeframe, after which veterinarians may use professional judgment to determine whether an additional examination is needed for treatment. California’s condition-specific model differs from that approach. Some California veterinarians may not be fully aware of the condition-specific requirement, which may create compliance challenges under current law.

Additionally, this bill creates “retired” and “retired volunteer” license categories at the Board for veterinarians and RVTs who volunteer at shelters, humane societies, or nonprofit animal organizations. These license categories will include a reduced licensure fee and fewer administrative requirements.

This bill also creates a “shelter veterinarian” license category to streamline licensure for veterinarians whose employment is limited to animal control shelters or humane societies.

AB 1999 also improves California’s veterinary telemedicine law by incorporating definitions for terms such as “telemedicine,” “teleconsultation,” and “teletriage,” and by updating existing statutory language to clarify how telemedicine may be practiced in the state. Following the passage of AB [1399](#) (Friedman, Chapter 475, Statutes of 2023), some existing regulatory provisions were superseded. The amendments in AB 1999 address these changes.

Lastly, the bill narrows California’s “owner-exemption” law, which permits animal owners to perform veterinary procedures on their own animals. The

current law does not specify species and therefore applies broadly. This can allow non-veterinarians to perform surgical or dental procedures on companion animals. AB 1999 prohibits owners from performing surgical or dental procedures on their own dogs and cats while maintaining the exemption for other contexts, including agriculture.

Implementation: The Board will update its guidance content, licensing materials, and outreach materials to reflect AB 1999. A newsletter will notify licensees about the shift to a patient-specific VCPR with defined 12-month (in-person) and 6-month (telemedicine) durations, new “shelter veterinarian,” “retired,” and “retired volunteer” license categories, updated telemedicine terminology, and the narrowed owner-exemption that now prohibits surgical or dental procedures on dogs and cats.

Significant BreEZe enhancements will be made to accommodate the new license types and updated statuses. Board staff is already working on the change requests with a January 1, 2027 implementation goal.

3. AB 2010 (Soria, Chapter 284, Statutes of 2026) Veterinary Medicine: Veterinary Surgery Premises: Spay and Neuter Services
Board Position: Support

Status: Approved by Governor / Filed with Secretary of State – September 18, 2026

Analysis: 8/21/26 – Assembly Floor
8/5/26 – Senate Floor
7/1/26 – Senate Floor
6/12/26 – Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee
5/15/26 – Assembly Floor
5/12/26 – Assembly Appropriations Committee
4/17/26 – Assembly Business and Professions Committee

Summary: This bill states that high-volume spay/neuter services - defined as the aseptic surgical sterilization by a veterinarian of 20 or more dogs, cats, or rabbits, or any combination thereof, within 12 consecutive hours - are not required to be performed in a separate surgical room.

Staff Comments: In the July 2026 Board [meeting materials](#), previous staff comments were provided, along with an [update](#) that the Board received a commitment from the author’s office to incorporate all of the Board’s requested amendments. As a result, the Board voted to maintain an oppose, unless amended position on the bill, but to subsequently take a support position if the bill was amended to include the Board’s requested amendments.

On August 5, 2026, the bill was amended to address all of the Board's concerns. On August 12, 2026, the Board issued a Support position letter to the author's office (see Attachment 1).

Implementation: The Board will update its veterinary premises guidance content and outreach materials to reflect AB 2010's clarification that high-volume spay/neuter services - defined as 20 or more aseptic surgical sterilization procedures within 12 consecutive hours - do not require a separate surgical room. Communications will emphasize that all other veterinary premises standards remain in place.

B. Legislative Proposal to Amend Penal Code Section 597.1 Regarding Animal Control Officer Use of Controlled Substances to Tranquilize or Euthanize an Animal

At the July 2026 Board meeting, staff presented background on ongoing confusion regarding whether Animal Control Officers (ACOs) may legally carry and administer controlled substances for euthanasia in the field. As outlined in the July background [memo](#), current law authorizes ACOs to administer controlled-substance tranquilizers solely "to gain control of" an animal under veterinary supervision, but does not explicitly permit possession or use of controlled substances for euthanasia.

Although federal law allows "mid-level practitioners," acting as agents of a veterinarian registered with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, to carry controlled substances (21 CFR § 1301.22, subd. (b)), this authority applies only to activities permitted under state law - leaving a gap for euthanasia-related possession or transport.

During the July 2026 meeting, Board members discussed the conflict between federal and state requirements, clarified the limits of ACO authority under Penal Code section 597.1, and noted the practical challenges faced by agencies in rural regions, where transporting severely injured animals long distances prolongs suffering. Staff explained that many veterinary state boards address similar issues by issuing an animal euthanasia technician certification to specifically authorize ACOs to possess and administer controlled substances. Notably, California already requires background checks for ACOs, the Board does not regulate them directly under the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act.

The Board acknowledged that the issue is primarily one of statutory clarity rather than expanding ACO authority, and that amending Penal Code section 597.1 to expressly authorize ACOs to possess, transport, and administer controlled substances for euthanasia would resolve the federal/state conflict. Board members generally agreed that a legislative amendment appeared straightforward and could be brought back for Board review at the October meeting.

Action Requested:

Please entertain a motion to submit to the California State Legislature the attached legislative proposal to amend Penal Code section 597.1 regarding animal control officer use of controlled substances to tranquilize or euthanize an animal.

Attachments:

1. AB 2010 Position Letter – August 12, 2026
2. Legislative Proposal to Amend Penal Code Section 597.1 Regarding Animal Control Officer Use of Controlled Substances to Tranquilize or Euthanize an Animal



August 12, 2026

The Honorable Esmeralda Z. Soria
 California State Assembly
 1021 O Street, Room 4110
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Assembly Bill (AB) 2010 (Soria, 2026) Veterinary Medicine: Veterinary Surgery
 Premises: Spay and Neuter Services

Position: Support

Dear Assembly Member Soria:

The California Veterinary Medical Board (Board) regulates the largest population of veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians in the nation. The Board's mission is to protect consumers and animals by regulating licensees, promoting professional standards, and diligently enforcing the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act (Practice Act).

The Board supports AB 2010, which would provide that high-volume spay or neuter services shall not be required to be performed in a separate surgical room. Although the Board had clarity and implementation concerns with previous versions of the bill, the Board agrees that such services can be performed in a separate designated area rather than a separate surgical room.

While the Board suggested further defining "high quality" in the definition of "high-quality, high-volume, spay and neuter" services, the August 5, 2026 version of the bill strikes the term "high quality" from the terminology, which resolves the Board's concern. The Board appreciates your willingness to accept most of the Board's requested amendments addressing the Board's concerns.

Thank you to your staff for the multiple meetings to work through the Board's concerns and come to a successful resolution for California consumers and their animals.

If you would like to discuss this further, please feel free to contact the Board's Executive Officer via email at Jessica.Sieferman@dca.ca.gov or phone at (916) 318-6241

Sincerely,

Maria Preciosa S. Solacito, DVM, President
 California Veterinary Medical Board

Kristi Pawlowski, RVT, Vice-President
 California Veterinary Medical Board

MISSION: *To protect consumers and animals by regulating licensees, promoting professional standards, and diligent enforcement of the California Veterinary Medicine Practice Act.*

CALIFORNIA VETERINARY MEDICAL BOARD

**LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL TO AMEND PENAL CODE SECTION 597.1 REGARDING
ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER USE OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES TO
TRANQUILIZE OR EUTHANIZE AN ANIMAL**

Additions shown in *blue italic* text.

Deletions shown in ~~red strikethrough~~ text.

597.1. (a) (1) Every owner, driver, or keeper of any animal who permits the animal to be in any building, enclosure, lane, street, square, or lot of any city, county, city and county, or judicial district without proper care and attention is guilty of a misdemeanor. Any peace officer, humane society officer, or animal control officer shall take possession of the stray or abandoned animal and shall provide care and treatment for the animal until the animal is deemed to be in suitable condition to be returned to the owner. When the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that very prompt action is required to protect the health or safety of the animal or the health or safety of others, the officer shall immediately seize the animal and comply with subdivision (f). In all other cases, the officer shall comply with the provisions of subdivision (g). The full cost of caring for and treating any animal properly seized under this subdivision or pursuant to a search warrant shall constitute a lien on the animal and the animal shall not be returned to its owner until the charges are paid, if the seizure is upheld pursuant to this section.

(2) Notwithstanding any other law, if an animal control officer or humane officer, when necessary to protect the health and safety of a wild, stray, or abandoned animal or the health and safety of others, seeks to administer ~~a tranquilizer that contains a~~ *drug, including* a controlled substance, as defined in Division 10 (commencing with Section 11000) of the Health and Safety Code, to *tranquelize the animal to gain control of the animal or immobilize the animal for transport for medical care that animal*, the officer may possess, *transport*, and administer that ~~tranquilizer controlled substance~~ with direct or indirect supervision as determined by a licensed veterinarian, provided that the officer has met each of the following requirements:

(A) Has received training in the administration of tranquilizers from a licensed veterinarian. The training shall be approved by the California Veterinary Medical Board.

(B) Has successfully completed the firearms component of a course relating to the exercise of police powers, as set forth in Section 832.

(C) Is authorized by the officer's agency or organization to possess and administer the tranquilizer in accordance with a policy established by the agency or organization and approved by the veterinarian who obtained the controlled substance.

(D) Has successfully completed the euthanasia training set forth in Section 2039 of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations.

(E) Has completed a state and federal fingerprinting background check and does not have any drug- or alcohol-related convictions.

(b) Every sick, disabled, infirm, or crippled animal, except a dog or cat, that is abandoned in any city, county, city and county, or judicial district may be humanely euthanized by the officer if, after a reasonable search, no owner of the animal can be found. *The officer may possess, transport, and administer a drug, including a controlled substance, as defined in Division 10 (commencing with Section 11000) of the Health and Safety Code, to euthanize the animal with direct or indirect supervision as determined by a licensed veterinarian if the officer has satisfied the requirements of subparagraphs (A) through (E) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (a).* It shall be the duty of all peace officers, humane society officers, and animal control officers to cause the animal to be humanely euthanized or rehabilitated and placed in a suitable home on information that the animal is stray or abandoned. The officer may likewise take charge of any animal, including a dog or cat, that by reason of lameness, sickness, feebleness, or neglect, is unfit for the labor it is performing, or that in any other manner is being cruelly treated, and provide care and treatment for the animal until it is deemed to be in a suitable condition to be returned to the owner. When the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that very prompt action is required to protect the health or safety of an animal or the health or safety of others, the officer shall immediately seize the animal and comply with subdivision (f). In all other cases, the officer shall comply with subdivision (g). The full cost of caring for and treating any animal properly seized under this subdivision or pursuant to a search warrant shall constitute a lien on the animal and the animal shall not be returned to its owner until the charges are paid.

(c) (1) Any peace officer, humane society officer, or animal control officer shall convey all injured cats and dogs found without their owners in a public place directly to a veterinarian known by the officer to be a veterinarian who ordinarily treats dogs and cats for a determination of whether the animal shall be immediately and humanely euthanized or shall be hospitalized under proper care and given emergency treatment.

(2) If the owner does not redeem the animal within the locally prescribed waiting period, the veterinarian may personally perform euthanasia on the animal. If the animal is treated and recovers from its injuries, the veterinarian may keep the animal for purposes of adoption, provided the responsible animal control agency has first been contacted and has refused to take possession of the animal.

(3) Whenever any animal is transferred to a veterinarian in a clinic, such as an emergency clinic that is not in continuous operation, the veterinarian may, in turn, transfer the animal to an appropriate facility.

(4) If the veterinarian determines that the animal shall be hospitalized under proper care and given emergency treatment, the costs of any services that are provided pending the owner's inquiry to the responsible agency, department, or society shall be paid from the dog license fees, fines, and fees for impounding dogs in the city, county, or city and county in which the animal was licensed or, if the animal is unlicensed, shall be paid by the jurisdiction in which the animal was found, subject to

the provision that this cost be repaid by the animal's owner. The full cost of caring for and treating any animal seized under this subdivision shall constitute a lien on the animal and the animal shall not be returned to the owner until the charges are paid. No veterinarian shall be criminally or civilly liable for any decision that the veterinarian makes or for services that the veterinarian provides pursuant to this subdivision.

(d) An animal control agency that takes possession of an animal pursuant to subdivision (c) shall keep records of the whereabouts of the animal from the time of possession to the end of the animal's impoundment, and those records shall be available for inspection by the public upon request for three years after the date the animal's impoundment ended.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, any peace officer, humane society officer, or any animal control officer may, with the approval of the officer's immediate superior, humanely euthanize any stray or abandoned animal in the field in any case where the animal is too severely injured to move or where a veterinarian is not available and it would be more humane to euthanize the animal.

(f) Whenever an officer authorized under this section seizes or impounds an animal based on a reasonable belief that prompt action is required to protect the health or safety of the animal or the health or safety of others, the officer shall, before the commencement of any criminal proceedings authorized by this section, provide the owner or keeper of the animal, if known or ascertainable after reasonable investigation, with the opportunity for a postseizure hearing to determine the validity of the seizure or impoundment, or both.

(1) The agency shall cause a notice to be affixed to a conspicuous place where the animal was situated or personally deliver a notice of the seizure or impoundment, or both, to the owner or keeper within 48 hours, excluding weekends and holidays. The notice shall include all of the following:

(A) The name, business address, and telephone number of the officer providing the notice.

(B) A description of the animal seized, including any identification upon the animal.

(C) The authority and purpose for the seizure or impoundment, including the time, place, and circumstances under which the animal was seized.

(D) A statement that, in order to receive a postseizure hearing, the owner or person authorized to keep the animal, or their agent, shall request the hearing by signing and returning an enclosed declaration of ownership or right to keep the animal to the agency providing the notice within 10 days, including weekends and holidays, of the date of the notice. The declaration may be returned by personal delivery or mail.

(E) A statement that the full cost of caring for and treating any animal properly seized under this section is a lien on the animal and that the animal shall not be returned to the owner until the charges are paid, and that failure to request or to attend a scheduled hearing shall result in liability for this cost.

(2) The postseizure hearing shall be conducted within 48 hours of the request, excluding weekends and holidays. The seizing agency may authorize its own officer or employee to conduct the hearing if the hearing officer is not the same person who directed the seizure or impoundment of the animal and is not junior in rank to that person. The agency may use the services of a hearing officer from outside the agency for the purposes of complying with this section.

(3) Failure of the owner or keeper, or of their agent, to request or to attend a scheduled hearing shall result in a forfeiture of any right to a postseizure hearing or right to challenge their liability for costs incurred.

(4) The agency, department, or society employing the person who directed the seizure shall be responsible for the costs incurred for caring and treating the animal, if it is determined in the postseizure hearing that the seizing officer did not have reasonable grounds to believe very prompt action, including seizure of the animal, was required to protect the health or safety of the animal or the health or safety of others. If it is determined the seizure was justified, the owner or keeper shall be personally liable to the seizing agency for the full cost of the seizure and care of the animal. The charges for the seizure and care of the animal shall be a lien on the animal. The animal shall not be returned to its owner until the charges are paid and the owner demonstrates to the satisfaction of the seizing agency or the hearing officer that the owner can and will provide the necessary care for the animal.

(g) Where the need for immediate seizure is not present and before the commencement of any criminal proceedings authorized by this section, the agency shall provide the owner or keeper of the animal, if known or ascertainable after reasonable investigation, with the opportunity for a hearing before any seizure or impoundment of the animal. The owner shall produce the animal at the time of the hearing unless, before the hearing, the owner has made arrangements with the agency to view the animal upon request of the agency, or unless the owner can provide verification that the animal was humanely euthanized. Any person who willfully fails to produce the animal or provide the verification is guilty of an infraction, punishable by a fine of not less than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) nor more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

(1) The agency shall cause a notice to be affixed to a conspicuous place where the animal was situated or personally deliver a notice stating the grounds for believing the animal should be seized under subdivision (a) or (b). The notice shall include all of the following:

(A) The name, business address, and telephone number of the officer providing the notice.

(B) A description of the animal to be seized, including any identification upon the animal.

(C) The authority and purpose for the possible seizure or impoundment.

(D) A statement that, in order to receive a hearing before any seizure, the owner or person authorized to keep the animal, or their agent, shall request the hearing by signing and returning the enclosed declaration of ownership or right to keep the animal to the officer providing the notice within two days, excluding weekends and holidays, of the date of the notice.

(E) A statement that the cost of caring for and treating any animal properly seized under this section is a lien on the animal, that any animal seized shall not be returned to the owner until the charges are paid, and that failure to request or to attend a scheduled hearing shall result in a conclusive determination that the animal may properly be seized and that the owner shall be liable for the charges.

(2) The preseizure hearing shall be conducted within 48 hours, excluding weekends and holidays, after receipt of the request. The seizing agency may authorize its own officer or employee to conduct the hearing if the hearing officer is not the same person who requests the seizure or impoundment of the animal and is not junior in rank to that person. The agency may use the services of a hearing officer from outside the agency for the purposes of complying with this section.

(3) Failure of the owner or keeper, or their agent, to request or to attend a scheduled hearing shall result in a forfeiture of any right to a preseizure hearing or right to challenge their liability for costs incurred pursuant to this section.

(4) The hearing officer, after the hearing, may affirm or deny the owner's or keeper's right to custody of the animal and, if reasonable grounds are established, may order the seizure or impoundment of the animal for care and treatment.

(h) If any animal is properly seized under this section or pursuant to a search warrant, the owner or keeper shall be personally liable to the seizing agency for the cost of the seizure and care of the animal. Further, if the charges for the seizure or impoundment and any other charges permitted under this section are not paid within 14 days of the seizure, or if the owner, within 14 days of notice of availability of the animal to be returned, fails to pay charges permitted under this section and take possession of the animal, the animal shall be deemed to have been abandoned and may be humanely euthanized or otherwise properly disposed of by the seizing agency.

(i) If the animal requires veterinary care and the humane society or public agency is not assured, within 14 days of the seizure of the animal, that the owner will provide the necessary care, the animal shall not be returned to its owner and shall be deemed to have been abandoned and may be humanely euthanized or otherwise properly disposed of by the seizing agency. A veterinarian may humanely euthanize an impounded animal without regard to the prescribed holding period when it has been determined that the animal has incurred severe injuries or is incurably crippled. A

veterinarian also may immediately humanely euthanize an impounded animal afflicted with a serious contagious disease unless the owner or the owner's agent immediately authorizes treatment of the animal by a veterinarian at the expense of the owner or agent.

(j) No animal properly seized under this section or pursuant to a search warrant shall be returned to its owner until the owner can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the seizing agency or hearing officer that the owner can and will provide the necessary care for the animal.

(k) (1) In the case of cats and dogs, before the final disposition of any criminal charges, the seizing agency or prosecuting attorney may file a petition in a criminal action requesting that, before that final disposition, the court issue an order forfeiting the animal to the city, county, or seizing agency. The petitioner shall serve a true copy of the petition upon the defendant and the prosecuting attorney.

(2) Upon receipt of the petition, the court shall set a hearing on the petition. The hearing shall be conducted within 14 days after the filing of the petition, or as soon as practicable.

(3) The petitioner shall have the burden of establishing beyond a reasonable doubt that, even in the event of an acquittal of the criminal charges, the owner will not legally be permitted to retain the animal in question. If the court finds that the petitioner has met its burden, the court shall order the immediate forfeiture of the animal as sought by the petition.

(4) Nothing in this subdivision is intended to authorize a seizing agency or prosecuting attorney to file a petition to determine an owner's ability to legally retain an animal pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (l) if a petition has previously been filed pursuant to this subdivision.

(l) (1) Upon the conviction of a person charged with a violation of this section, or Section 597 or 597a, all animals lawfully seized and impounded with respect to the violation shall be adjudged by the court to be forfeited and shall thereupon be transferred to the impounding officer or appropriate public entity for proper adoption or other disposition. A person convicted of a violation of this section shall be personally liable to the seizing agency for all costs of impoundment from the time of seizure to the time of proper disposition. Upon conviction, the court shall order the convicted person to make payment to the appropriate public entity for the costs incurred in the housing, care, feeding, and treatment of the seized or impounded animals. Each person convicted in connection with a particular animal may be held jointly and severally liable for restitution for that particular animal. The payment shall be in addition to any other fine or sentence ordered by the court.

(2) The court may also order, as a condition of probation, that the convicted person be prohibited from owning, possessing, caring for, or residing with, animals of any kind, and require the convicted person to immediately deliver all animals in the

convicted person's possession to a designated public entity for adoption or other lawful disposition or provide proof to the court that the person no longer has possession, care, or control of any animals. In the event of the acquittal or final discharge without conviction of the person charged, if the animal is still impounded, the animal has not been previously deemed abandoned pursuant to subdivision (h), the court has not ordered that the animal be forfeited pursuant to subdivision (k), the court shall, on demand, direct the release of seized or impounded animals to the defendant upon a showing of proof of ownership.

(3) Any questions regarding ownership shall be determined in a separate hearing by the court where the criminal case was finally adjudicated and the court shall hear testimony from any persons who may assist the court in determining ownership of the animal. If the owner is determined to be unknown or the owner is prohibited or unable to retain possession of the animals for any reason, the court shall order the animals to be released to the appropriate public entity for adoption or other lawful disposition. This section is not intended to cause the release of any animal, bird, reptile, amphibian, or fish seized or impounded pursuant to any other statute, ordinance, or municipal regulation. This section shall not prohibit the seizure or impoundment of animals as evidence as provided for under any other provision of law.

(m) It shall be the duty of all peace officers, humane society officers, and animal control officers to use all currently acceptable methods of identification, both electronic and otherwise, to determine the lawful owner or caretaker of any seized or impounded animal. It shall also be their duty to make reasonable efforts to notify the owner or caretaker of the whereabouts of the animal and any procedures available for the lawful recovery of the animal and, upon the owner's and caretaker's initiation of recovery procedures, retain custody of the animal for a reasonable period of time to allow for completion of the recovery process. Efforts to locate or contact the owner or caretaker and communications with persons claiming to be the owner or caretaker shall be recorded and maintained and be made available for public inspection.