

California bill aims to boost dog licensing

By Cynthia Hubert, Sacramento Bee

Got a pet pooch? Local government agencies are motivated more than ever to make sure you get him licensed, and soon may get some help from the state.

Assembly Bill 1121, on Gov. Jerry Brown's desk, seeks to give local shelters a new tool for enforcing a state licensing law that mostly has been ignored, without consequences, by dog owners.

Across California, only about 16 percent of pet dogs are licensed, said Jennifer Fearing, chief economist and California senior state director for the Humane Society of the United States.

In Sacramento County, a mere 9 percent of pooches carry licenses that allow agencies to track their whereabouts, pay for services such as animal control, and monitor rabies vaccinations. The state does not require pet cats to be licensed.

"A lot of people don't even realize that dog licensing is the law, and has been since the 1950s," said Fearing. "It's good for the animal, and it's good for government animal shelters."

Sponsored by Assemblyman Richard Pan, D-Sacramento, the bill would require pet stores, rescue groups and others that sell dogs to submit monthly reports to local licensing agencies.

The reports would list contact information for each person who adopted or bought a pooch, allowing the agencies to contact pet owners and make sure the animal gets licensed. Fines of up to \$100 would be imposed on those who fail to comply with the

law.

Read the whole story