



Dear Members,

This week's update includes a serious threat to specialty pets in Puerto Rico, an expanded aquarium species list in Maine, and opportunities to support our advocacy. We also have much to be grateful for following AquaShella Chicago.



Thank You to Our AquaShella Community

Vanessa Costanza, Art Parola and I were grateful for the support the industry showed at AquaShella Chicago this past weekend. Thank you to Vanessa and Amanda from Pet Supplies Plus for helping organize the auction, to Pet Supplies Plus and Chewy for their own raffles, and to Hikari for its generous \$5,000 contribution to the Aquatics Defense Fund, which we used as a match to encourage other industry members to participate. We also appreciate Chewy's raffle support at AquaShella New Jersey.

A special thank-you goes to the AquaShella show organizers for bringing the community together and supporting this new fundraising effort. PAN's final proceeds are still being determined after show expenses, but this was a solid start. These fundraisers build awareness of PAN and give the entire community an opportunity to support our work, broadening participation beyond the supporters we repeatedly turn to.

Legislative & Regulatory News

PRIORITY ALERT: Puerto Rico Ban Threatens the Specialty Pet Industry

Puerto Rico HB 1453 could devastate the specialty pet industry. The proposed five-year moratorium would prohibit importing, selling, breeding and transferring exotic animals, with narrow exceptions. Its broad definition of nonnative species could shut down the core activities on which specialty pet businesses depend, while also restricting transfers of lawfully held animals.

The bill has not become law, but it can carry into 2027. PAN is monitoring this serious threat. **If your business has Puerto Rico operations or supply relationships, please share the potential impacts with us.**

Tell Congress to Pass the Farm Bill

Please respond to PAN's September 28 action alert, "Tell Congress to Pass the Farm Bill with Healthy Dog Provision," and [urge your members of Congress to support these provisions](#).

The Senate Agriculture Committee advanced S. 5526 on September 24. It includes Healthy Dog Importation Act language and adds annual public reporting of aggregated dog-importation data. PAN supports this effort, and continued member engagement matters as Congress works toward a final Farm Bill. Committee approval is an important step; the bill has not yet become law.

Maine Aquarium Species Update

Maine has posted an updated unrestricted species list that includes additional aquarium fishes. The current list includes Ember Tetra (*Hyphessobrycon amandae*), Turquoise Rainbowfish (*Melanotaenia lacustris*), Dwarf Neon Rainbowfish (*Melanotaenia praecox*) and Croaking Gourami (*Trichopsis vittata*).

Members can use the department's list to review the species allowed in Maine and verify scientific names before sourcing animals.

[View Maine's updated unrestricted species list](#)

Bird Care and Responsible Pet Transport

A USDA review of paperwork requirements associated with Animal Welfare Act bird standards has an October 19 comment deadline. Members who work with affected birds can share practical information and recordkeeping concerns with PAN.

We have also prepared a letter seeking discussion with Alaska and Hawaiian Airlines about whether veterinary clearance and appropriate safeguards could preserve travel options for healthy individual brachycephalic dogs and cats between Hawaii and the mainland. The proposed approach recognizes the additional health risks and the unique transportation needs of island families. No airline agreement is confirmed.

State and Local Issues to Watch

- **Pennsylvania:** SB 1311, which PAN opposes, advanced from committee with requirements to verify an animal recipient against an abuse registry.
- **New Jersey:** SB 4576 would establish dog-trainer licensing. Staff are watching possible effects on in-store services.
- **North Kingstown, Rhode Island:** The proposed pet sales ban has been deferred to October 19, with the agenda pending. The latest version adds rabbits and denies exemptions for existing businesses.
- **DeKalb County, Georgia:** The proposed dog, cat and rabbit sales ban is scheduled to return October 13. These proposals remain active; postponement does not mean they have been defeated.
- **California:** SB 1296, a PAN-supported measure requiring clearer rental pet-policy disclosures and specified application-fee refunds, was enacted and takes effect April 1, 2027.
- **North Carolina:** PAN-supported HB 96 remains vetoed after September reconsideration dates passed without action. The next override sessions are set for October 26–28.

Upcoming Hearings and Comment Deadlines

- **October 6:** Mobile animal ordinance; New Hampshire rabies-exemption work session; Pennsylvania service-animal and hoarding hearings. St. Lucie County's proposed ordinance remains on the agenda, with a continuance request expected.

- **October 9:** Comments due on Florida's rule concerning veterinary-premises signage for written prescriptions.
- **October 13:** DeKalb County proposed retail pet sales ban.
- **October 19:** North Kingstown proposed sales ban, agenda pending;
- comments due on the Illinois animal-control rule and USDA bird paperwork requirements.
- **October 26–28:** North Carolina veto-override sessions.

How You Can Help

Please respond to [the Farm Bill alert](#), let PAN know how proposals would affect your business, and help connect us with credible local voices for testimony, lawmaker conversations and community outreach. Your practical examples of responsible care and the people your business serves strengthen our advocacy.

Thank you for contributing your expertise, time and fundraising support to protect our community.

Warmly,

Sandy Moore

CEO, Pet Advocacy Network