

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**DELAWARE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**LOCAL LAW INTRO. NO. 15 OF 2021**

**A LOCAL LAW OF THE COUNTY OF DELAWARE, NEW YORK, TO BE KNOWN  
AS THE ‘DELAWARE COUNTY ANIMAL ABUSER REGISTRY’ PROTECTING  
ANIMALS FROM ABUSE BY ESTABLISHING A REGISTRY FOR  
ANIMAL ABUSERS**

**FEBRUARY 24, 2021**

The Delaware County Board of Supervisors held a Public Hearing regarding Local Law Intro. No. 15 of 2021 in the Board of Supervisors’ Room of the Senator Charles D. Cook County Office Building, 111 Main Street, Delhi, New York, and via Zoom at 12:45 p.m. on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, Chairman Tina B. Molé presiding.

Chairman Molé called the hearing to order.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

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**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that the Delaware County Board of Supervisors will hold a Public Hearing, Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 12:45 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors’ Room of the County Office Building, 111 Main Street, Delhi, New York, concerning proposed Local Law as follows:

Introductory No. 15 Section I. This Local Law shall be known as “Delaware County Animal Abuser Registry Law.” The purpose of this local law is to establish an online registry identifying individuals residing in Delaware County who have been convicted of an animal abuse crime. A copy of the local law is available on the County website at: [www.co.delaware.ny.us](http://www.co.delaware.ny.us) or by contacting the office of the Clerk of the Board at (607) 832-5110.

All persons interested in speaking concerning the proposed local law may attend the hearing via Zoom. The link will be provided on the County website at: [www.co.delaware.ny.us](http://www.co.delaware.ny.us) or by calling the office of the Clerk of the Board at (607) 832-5110. To ensure that your comments are heard, they will also be accepted by email until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 22, 2021 to: [christa.schafer@co.delaware.ny.us](mailto:christa.schafer@co.delaware.ny.us).

Dated: February 12, 2021

Christa M. Schafer  
Clerk of the Board  
Delaware County Board of Supervisors

Chairman Molé asked attendees to please indicate in the chat box if they wished to speak so they would be unmuted to give their name and the town they reside in and state their comment.

Jill Stafford from Sidney attending via Zoom said that she has been involved with animal rescue and sheltering for about 8 years. She helped draft and propose this law so it is very exciting that we have finally reached the day it has come to a public hearing. She noted we are very lucky that we live in a county that does not see a widespread amount of animal cruelty, but we have had some high profile cases in the last few years where she felt we needed some long-term accountability for those that are doing these types of things to animals. She believes that we are very lucky to have the Delaware County Sheriff's Office. They do a great job enforcing the Agriculture and Market laws as well as they can as the law will allow. She believes this local law will take it to the next level to help with long-term accountability for these types of crimes that we definitely want to eliminate and reduce in our area.

Deb Crute, Director of the Heart of the Catskills Humane Society in Delhi, attending via Zoom stated their humane society is in favor of any laws that further animal rights. They are glad to see that this is coming before the Board and they are 100 percent behind animal rights. She thanked the Board and stated they see this as a step in the right direction and look forward to working with the County and the Sheriff's Office for the prevention of animal cruelty and abuse.

Marie VanValkenburgh of Delhi, in attendance, gave a disclaimer that although she volunteers at the Heart of the Catskills, she does not represent them because what she has to say here may be a little controversial. She stated she applauds the intent of this registry. She volunteers at the Heart of the Catskills Humane Society. Her passion is dogs. She has conservatively volunteered hundreds of hours there. She has seen neglected and abused dogs, animals that were left in homes when their owners moved, animals kept in outbuildings with bare essentials, and animals who were starved and destitute. There was one beaten so badly he was almost blind and deaf. We heard the stories about him from neighbors after he came to the shelter but no complaints were made. There was one that was locked out of his home whenever the owners went away for a weekend or a week. She and Deb Crute caught him and after a couple weeks at the shelter, he got loose on his way to the outside kennels. He ran around the shelter until he found an open door and he ran back inside. Happy ending—he was adopted out of the area. Not one of these owners was arrested and many moved out of the area. Shelters are left to pick up the pieces while good citizens look the other way. If you are not prepared to turn in a neighbor who is abusing an animal, testify against them, and see them convicted because your kids go to school together, they have been here for five generations, or their grandmother goes to your church, then you have to vote against this resolution. You are then perpetuating animal abuse and voting for a feel-good resolution like giftwrapping your garbage and tying it up with a pretty bow. She thanked the Board.

Erin Insigna, Director of the Delaware Valley Humane Society in Sidney, attending via Zoom stated she wanted to thank everyone for this consideration. The law is truly something they are very proud of but certainly wish they did not have to have it. She and Jill Stafford were the ones to respond along with some dog control officers to the Franklin 20 case a year ago and they are still fighting that fight for these animals. She wished they did not have the need to have this registry but there is a need and it is necessary. She deals with different counties as the director here and is thankful for being part of Delaware County. The Sheriff's Office has been such a huge part of what we have been able to do here at the shelter. She thanked the Board and wished them to have a great day.

Ms. Molé announced comments were received by email and shared with the Board. As part of the official record, below are the comments received.

Shian Bolster of Hancock by email dated February 22, 2021. I believe this is an amazing idea because there are too many people who abuse dogs or don't take them out enough etc. and they should have to be on a registry so they can't adopt other animals and treat them the same.

Lori Heggenstaller of Sidney by email dated February 22, 2021. I am writing to express my support for Remo's law (Animal Abuse Registry). I feel that this law is needed because the current state and federal laws do not hold convicted persons accountable long term and it is important that they be held accountable. We live in a humane community that doesn't tolerate abuse of any kind. As a resident of Delaware County, I feel that this proposed law would be of great benefit to the community.

Donna Torch of Hancock by email dated February 22, 2021. I am Donna Torch the DCO for the Town of Hancock in Delaware County. I read the article that was posted in the Hancock Herald and I would love to see this law come into effect. Too many animals suffer repeatedly at the hands of people that abuse them and turn around and continue to get and abuse animals. I am praying that this becomes real law and I pray that our Delaware County Sheriff Department continues to investigate abuse and prosecute to the fullest. Thank you for the chance to give my opinion.

Michele Rowe by email February 22, 2021. I just wanted to add my "voice" as a Delaware County Resident in favor of the Animal Abuse Registry. As a Foster for a local Pitbull Rescue I have noticed for a long time people who are not directly involved in the Rescue etc. world have no resources to go to when they are in need of rehoming a pet to look at to make sure the person they are rehoming their pet to is not a known animal abuser this will lend them that availability. It also lends the information to rescues and shelters to add these persons to their DNA/Do Not Adopt List. So proud of my County stepping up to the plate on this and hopefully other counties will follow suit.

Valerie J. Stafford of Unadilla by email February 22, 2021. I am writing in support of the local law Intro. No. 15 of 2021 for the Delaware County Animal Abuse Registry. My daughter is very involved in animal rescue and I think it's very important for those convicted to not own animals again. If there is no law, there is no way to keep them from doing this horrendous crime over and over. I look forward to seeing the law go in to effect.

Trudy Sheldon by telephone on February 24, 2021. She is in favor of the animal abuser registry and good luck.

Since no one else wished to speak, Chairman Molé declared the hearing adjourned at 1:00 p.m.