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Contact: Jaime Garza
1-916-327-8988

Legislation Puts Safety First When Buying Pet Medications Tax Relief Will Benefit California Pet Owners

Sacramento, CA — They have the best intentions, keeping their pets healthy and saving money. Sounds like a good thing to do, right? Not when it involves buying pet medications from unregulated outlets that may deliver incorrect, outdated, or dangerous medications.

That's why Senator Cathleen Galgiani (D-Stockton) has authored Senate Bill 688 to help animal owners afford reliable animal prescriptions and to maintain with their veterinarian the continuum of care that provides pets and livestock with appropriate monitoring and oversight. The bill will be heard in the Senate Governance and Finance Committee on Wednesday, May 8, 2013, at 9:30 a.m. in Room 112 at the State Capitol.

"I agreed to author this important legislation to make pet medical care more affordable and accessible. As a pet owner myself, I know how costly medical care for pets can be and this bill will provide savings to pet owners and encourages proper medical treatment for our pets," said Senator Galgiani.

Sponsored by the California State Board of Equalization and co-sponsored by the California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), SB 688 will exempt from sales and use tax qualified transactions involving drugs and medications used to treat animals.

Board of Equalization Chairman Jerome E. Horton said, "This exemption will help California consumers by treating animal prescriptions similar to those for humans with regard to exemption from sales and use tax."

Currently, veterinarians are required to pay sales or use tax on their purchases of drugs and medicines they administer and prescribe for the treatment of animals. This cost is usually then passed on to the pet owner. The proposed legislation would create a sales and use tax exemption for drugs and medicines used, supplied, or sold by licensed veterinarians, government run animal shelters, or certain nonprofit animal welfare organizations.

The National Association of Boards of Pharmacy said, "Many websites selling prescription drugs are unlicensed, operating illegally, or operating from foreign countries where medicines shipped to the United States are unregulated. Thus, there is no way of knowing whether the medicine you receive is contaminated, sub-potent, super-potent, expired, or counterfeit, or whether it has been stored and shipped under proper conditions to maintain its effectiveness."



Medications purchased from sources other than veterinarians may not provide the needed medical benefits to the animal, and even worse, could be dangerous and do serious harm. By obtaining these drugs through their veterinarian, consumers will be counseled regarding proper administration and potential adverse reactions. Passage of SB 688 will assure the quality of medications dispensed for the care of companion animals and provide the safe treatment of livestock, thereby protecting public health.

Chris Cowing, DVM, president of the CVMA said, “The CVMA is strongly embracing SB 688 as a significant step forward to help clients achieve savings for the necessary care and treatment of their animals.”

The California Sales and Use Tax law already provides for an exemption for human prescription medicine. By providing a similar exemption to animal medications, SB 688 will protect the health of millions of California pets and livestock by making prescription medications safer and more affordable.

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The five-member California State Board of Equalization (BOE) is a publicly elected tax board. The BOE collects more than \$53.7 billion annually in taxes and fees supporting state and local government services. It hears business tax appeals, acts as the appellate body for franchise and personal income tax appeals, and serves a significant role in the assessment and administration of property taxes. For more information on other taxes and fees in California, visit www.taxes.ca.gov.

Senator Cathleen Galgiani represents the 5th Senate District which includes all of San Joaquin County and portions of both Stanislaus County and Sacramento County.

The California Veterinary Medical Association is the largest state veterinary medical association in the United States, with more than 6,300 members. For more information, visit www.cvma.net.

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