
Abused animals prompt call for better legislation

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— Submitted photo



The body of a golden retriever is shown still tethered to the wall of an empty house in Dunville. Members of the RCMP entered the home and found the dead dog, and another dog, still alive. Police say the owners of the house moved away several weeks ago, leaving the dogs and a cat in the home.



Roland Butler

Aday

after revelations about two severely mistreated dogs near Placentia, Liberal MHA Roland Butler questioned why the government has yet to pass beefed-up animal protection legislation.

In April 2009, Natural Resources Minister Kathy Dunderdale said the government was looking to update its six animal protection laws — and fold them

all into one comprehensive act.

A spokeswoman for the department said it had completed a review of comparable legislation across Canada, and consulted with stakeholders in the province.

Olga McWilliam-Benson, vicepresident of the St. John's Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), said the organization would like more powers to remove animals from homes where they are abused or neglected.

The SPCA would also like to increase fines for those who abuse animals, and prevent offenders from owning animals.

McWilliam-Benson called the current state of affairs "grossly insufficient."

When members of the SPCA and the RCMP entered a house in Dunville, they found one dog tied to a wall and severely malnourished; another dog was dead and lying in its own feces.

RCMP Sgt. Boyd Merrill said they have identified the owner of the property, and the police are working to get in touch with him.

The government spokeswoman was quick to point out that any charges that would arise would be under the Criminal Code of Canada, and outside provincial purview.

Action needed

But Butler said that with the sheer number of incidents that have come to light recently, something needs to be done.

"Every day, almost, we hear something with regards to cruelty to animals," he said. "Back a few months ago, there was a situation in Corner Brook. There was another one on the Southern Shore. Out in my area (Port de Grave) we hear talk of the same thing, and I think it's time now for government to step up and deal with this issue."