

# Maybe Next Year: “Veterinary Technician Workforce Enhancement Act”

By Dr. Al Balay, Chair, MVMA Veterinary Technician Committee

In this article #11 in the series, we share an update of where we are in the legislative process and some additional information. During the 2021 legislative session, the MVMA Veterinary Technician Committee introduced legislation proposing licensure of Veterinary Technicians in the Minnesota House (House File #2553). A bill was introduced in the Minnesota Senate in February 2022 (Senate File 2935). The bills have numerous co-authors and bipartisan support in both Legislative Chambers.

In short, we're "dead in the water" for the 2022 legislative session. The bills did not make it into committee hearings in either legislative chamber this year. We're not surprised. MVMA lobbyists had indicated that the legislators would be focused during this session on other issues especially the \$9.3 million surplus. Despite all our efforts, both the House and Senate made it clear that they would not be hearing licensure/scope of practice bills this session. We've learned a lot about the committee structure and that everything at the legislature is procedural in nature.

Though disappointed, we are not defeated. The MVMA Day at the Capitol was a very successful event. The bills had a great deal of support from legislators in the House and Senate who had been contacted by both veterinarians and technicians. We will continue to work on informing our veterinary team members about the initiative and possibly focus some efforts on educating the general public about the veterinary technician profession and our licensure efforts. Kim Horne and I met with Kelly Andrews, MVMA Executive Director, and we are working with the MVMA lobbyists on specific strategies for next year's legislative session. We will also clean-up the proposed bill language as we move forward and will be better prepared next year. One of the MVMA lobbyists had a good message for us; "this legislation can be pursued next session which will hopefully bring a more conducive climate for these types of bills."

It is our intent to re-introduce the bill next year in both the House and Senate. We continue to receive questions about the "timing" of when the licensure process might begin and "rule writing". Once the bill is passed and signed by the Governor, the Board of Veterinary Medicine will need between 12 – 18 months for the rule writing process. We have been assured by the Board of Veterinary Medicine that there will be a period for public comment including time for input from the veterinary community.

Currently in the bill there is a recommendation of a 2-year window (sunset clause) to allow those seeking licensure via the grandfather clause to submit their application. The chief author of the House Bill (an Emergency Medical Technician) indicated that it is not unusual for professional licensure bills to have up to a 10-year sunset of the grandfathering clause. The MVMA Veterinary Technician Committee believes that 10 years is excessive. Considering the unknown length of time for sunset and the time for rule writing, it is important to state that once the bill is passed, there will be a number of years before final title protection for licensed veterinary technicians. We've got time to prepare for licensure and get it right!

**[Stay up-to-date on the Veterinary Practice Act for Veterinary Technician licensure here \(https://www.mvma.org/veterinary-technician-licensure\). This page provides more information, supporting documents, letters of support and more.](https://www.mvma.org/veterinary-technician-licensure)**



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