§ 114-8.7. Reports of animal cruelty and animal welfare violations.

(a) The Attorney General shall establish a hotline to receive reports of allegations of animal cruelty or violations of the Animal Welfare Act, Article 3 of Chapter 19A of the General Statutes, against animals under private ownership, by means including telephone, email, and website. The Attorney General shall periodically publicize the hotline telephone number, email address, website address, and any other means by which the Attorney General may receive reports of allegations of animal cruelty or violations of the Animal Welfare Act. Any individual who makes a report under this section shall disclose his or her name and telephone number and any other information the Attorney General may require.

(b) When the Attorney General receives allegations involving activity that the Attorney General determines may involve cruelty to animals under private ownership in violation of Article 47 of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes, the allegations shall be referred to the appropriate local animal control authority for the unit or units of local government within which the violations are alleged to have occurred. When the Attorney General receives allegations involving activity that the Attorney General determines may involve violations of the Animal Welfare Act, the allegations shall be referred to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The Attorney General shall record the total number of reports received on the hotline and the number of reports received against any individual on the hotline.

(c) Notwithstanding other provisions of law, the Department of Justice is authorized to spend any federal, State, local, or private funds available for this purpose to administer the provisions of this section.

(d) Notwithstanding G.S. 147-33.72C and related provisions of law, in order to expedite the timely implementation of technology systems to record and manage public allegations and complaints received pursuant to this section, the Department of Justice is exempted from external agency project approval standards. (2015-286, s. 4.36(a); 2025-25, s. 29(1), (5).)