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STATE POLICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pennsylvania State Police Remind Pet Owners of “Hot Car Bill”

Harrisburg, PA – With warmer summer weather in the forecast, the Pennsylvania State Police reminds animal owners to think about the health and safety of their pets.

In October 2018, Governor Tom Wolf signed Act 104 of 2018, otherwise known as the “Hot Car Bill.” The law provides protection for law enforcement and emergency responders when a dog or cat is removed from a motor vehicle when the animal is showing signs of distress.

The law states that an officer or emergency responder must have a good-faith and reasonable belief that the dog or cat is in imminent danger, make a reasonable effort to locate the driver of the motor vehicle, take reasonable steps to ensure or restore the well-being of the dog or cat, use no more force than necessary to enter the motor vehicle, and leave notice on the vehicle about where the dog or cat can be retrieved.

This law does not give civilians the authority to take this type of action. If you see a dog or cat in a motor vehicle that appears to be in distress, contact the local authorities. Do not enter the motor vehicle yourself.

“Properly caring for and protecting your pets should be a priority for all pet owners,” said State Police Animal Cruelty officer Michael Spada. “Utilize common sense and contact your local veterinarian if you have any questions or concerns.”

Animals can suffer from heat exhaustion and heat stroke just like humans. Both dogs and cats release heat through their paws and by panting. Ensure your pets have access to fresh, cool water and proper sustenance for the breed. Failure to do so could result in possible criminal charges.

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