



Steven W. Troxler
Commissioner

North Carolina Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services
Veterinary Division

Christina L. Waggett
Assistant Commissioner
for Consumer Protection

Michael Martin, DVM
State Veterinarian

March 13, 2026

Siglinda Scarpa
Owner, The Goathouse Refuge
680 Alton Alston Road
Pittsboro, NC 27312
and via email:
siglinda@goathouserefuge.org

Re: SUSPENSION ADDENDUM

Facility: The Goathouse Refuge
Registration Number 264

Dear Ms. Scarpa:

On December 19, 2025, pursuant to N.C. General Statute (“NCGS”) § 19A-30(2), (3), and (8), the Animal Welfare Section (“AWS”), of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (“NCDA&CS”), suspended the animal shelter certificate of registration for The Goathouse Refuge Animal Shelter (“the shelter”). On February 19, 2026, AWS conducted a Facility Compliance Inspection (“FCI”) to ascertain whether the shelter had achieved sufficient compliance for the suspension to be lifted. A follow-up site visit to gather additional information for the FCI was conducted on February 26, 2026. Although some improvements in compliance were noted, this February FCI was marked as “Disapproved” due to new violations and the repetitive nature of several of the other violations.

The February FCI revealed that a cat named Marble 4 was adopted on February 7, 2026 as the adoption paperwork had been completed and the adoption fee was paid. The adopter did not take Marble 4 home as she had an eye infection. The shelter kept Marble 4 to provide veterinary care for the eye infection even though she now belonged to a member of the public. The shelter’s spreadsheet showed that Marble 4 was taken home by the adopter as of February 21, 2026. Additional shelter paperwork showed that the adopters had not taken the cat home. AWS contacted the adopters directly who stated that they did not take the cat from the shelter due to her medical condition and have decided against adopting her.

Review of additional medical records during the FCI revealed that multiple cats have recently had full mouth extractions due to severe gingivitis and stomatitis. Stomatitis is a very painful condition typically seen in cats housed in large group settings long term and affected cats are often chronic carriers of calicivirus (Infectious Disease Management in Animal Shelters, 2nd Edition, Miller, Janeczko, and Hurley). The shelter records show that these dental disease conditions warranting the extraction of most, and in some cases all, the cats’ teeth and the underlying infectious disease condition had been present for more than 30 days at the shelter. **Therefore, for the shelter to comply with 02 NC Administrative**

Code Chapter 52J .0210(c), the shelter shall obtain and follow a veterinarian's written recommendations for correcting this disease problem and any underlying infectious causes. The shelter is to send a copy of these written veterinary recommendations to AWS within 10 days. All shelter cats that can safely undergo a physical examination shall be examined by a veterinarian to know the extent of the disease condition and underlying infectious diseases in the shelter and the medical condition of each cat.

Given the infectious, painful, and serious nature of this disease condition, the shelter may not adopt or transfer out any cats until the written veterinary recommendations have been obtained and implemented. When the shelter has mitigated the disease condition to the extent that the veterinarian believes it is safe for the animals and the community to resume adoptions and transfers, the shelter shall notify AWS. Adoptions and transfers will not be allowed under the December 19, 2025 Notice of Suspension unless AWS gives its approval for these activities to resume.

Your attention to this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patricia Norris DVM MS".

Patricia Norris, DVM, MS
Director, Animal Welfare Section

cc: Dr. Michael Martin, State Veterinarian
Christina L. Waggett, Assistant Commissioner, NCDA&CS
Jonathan Lanier, General Counsel, NCDA&CS
Lindsey Spain, Special Deputy Attorney General

Appendix

REFERENCED STATUTES AND REGULATIONS

§ 19A-26. Certificate of registration required for animal shelter.

No person shall operate an animal shelter unless a certificate of registration for such animal shelter shall have been granted by the Director. Application for such certificate shall be made in the manner provided by the Director. No fee shall be required for such application or certificate. Certificates of registration shall be valid for a period of one year or until suspended or revoked and may be renewed for like periods upon application in the manner provided.

§ 19A-30. Refusal, suspension or revocation of certificate or license.

The Director may refuse to issue or renew or may suspend or revoke a certificate of registration for any animal shelter or a license for any public auction, kennel, pet shop, or dealer, if after an impartial investigation as provided in this Article he determines that any one or more of the following grounds apply:

- (1) Material misstatement in the application for the original certificate of registration or license or in the application for any renewal under this Article;
- (2) Willful disregard or violation of this Article or any rules issued pursuant thereto;
- (3) Failure to provide adequate housing facilities and/or primary enclosures for the purposes of this Article, or if the feeding, watering, sanitizing and housing practices at the animal shelter, public auction, pet shop, or kennel are not consistent with the intent of this Article or the rules adopted under this Article;
- (4) Allowing one's license under this Article to be used by an unlicensed person;
- (5) Conviction of any crime an essential element of which is misstatement, fraud, or dishonesty, or conviction of any felony;
- (6) Making substantial misrepresentations or false promises of a character likely to influence, persuade, or induce in connection with the business of a public auction, commercial kennel, pet shop, or dealer;
- (7) Pursuing a continued course of misrepresentation of or making false promises through advertising, salesmen, agents, or otherwise in connection with the business to be licensed;
- (8) Failure to possess the necessary qualifications or to meet the requirements of this Article for the issuance or holding of a certificate of registration or license.

The Director shall, before refusing to issue or renew and before suspension or revocation of a certificate of registration or a license, give to the applicant or holder thereof a written notice containing a statement indicating in what respects the applicant or holder has failed to satisfy the requirements for the holding of a certificate of registration or a license. If a certificate of registration or a license is suspended or revoked under the provisions hereof, the holder shall have five days from such suspension or revocation to surrender all certificates of registration or licenses issued thereunder to the Director or his authorized representative.

A person to whom a certificate of registration or a license is denied, suspended, or revoked by the Director may contest the action by filing a petition under G.S. 150B-23 within five days after the denial, suspension, or revocation.

Any licensee whose license is revoked under the provisions of this Article shall not be eligible to apply for a new license hereunder until one year has elapsed from the date of the order revoking said license or if an appeal is taken from said order of revocation, one year from the date of the order or final judgment sustaining said revocation. Any person who has been an officer, agent, or employee of a licensee whose license has been revoked or suspended and who is responsible for or participated in the

violation upon which the order of suspension or revocation was based, shall not be licensed within the period during which the order of suspension or revocation is in effect.

§ 19A-40. Civil Penalties.

The Director may assess a civil penalty of not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) against any person who violates a provision of this Article or any rule promulgated thereunder. In determining the amount of the penalty, the Director shall consider the degree and extent of harm caused by the violation. The clear proceeds of civil penalties assessed pursuant to this section shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.

02 NCAC 52J .0210 VETERINARY CARE

(c) If there is a disease problem that persists for more than 30 days at the facility, the facility operator shall obtain and follow a veterinarian's written recommendations for correcting the problem. These recommendations shall include, at a minimum: sanitation of primary enclosures, common areas, exercise areas and accessories, and protocols for animal intake, evaluation, isolation, disease recognition and treatment and euthanasia (in animal shelters).

(d) Each dog and cat shall be observed daily by the animal caretaker who has been adequately trained or is experienced in animal care or is under the direct supervision of a person who has such training or experience. Sick or diseased, injured, lame, or blind dogs or cats shall be provided with adequate veterinary care in a timely manner or be euthanized, provided that the euthanasia shall not affect compliance with any state or local law requiring the holding, for a specified period, of animals suspected of being diseased. If an animal cannot be euthanized due to a required holding period and does not meet the criteria of G.S. 19A-32.1(b)(2), then adequate veterinary care shall be provided to the animal.

History Note: Authority G.S. 19A-24; Eff. April 1, 1984; Amended Eff. March 23, 2009; January 1, 2005; Readopted Eff. September 1, 2022.