

AlbertMohler.com

Disaster Plans Must Include Pet Evacuations?

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

The federal government is to require states to prepare evacuation plans for pets, as well as for humans, according to press reports. just take a look at this passage from coverage in *The Washington Post*:

A television shot of a little boy losing his dog during Katrina rescue operations was the catalyst for a House vote Monday on legislation requiring pets to be considered in future emergency preparedness plans.

“The dog was taken away from this little boy, and to watch his face was a singularly revealing and tragic experience,” said Rep. Tom Lantos, D-Calif., sponsor of the Pet Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act. “This legislation was born at that moment.”

The House was to vote late Monday on the bill, which requires that state and local preparedness offices take into account pet owners, household pets and service animals when drawing up evacuation plans. Offices that fail to do so would not qualify for grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The New York Transit Authority is considering a similar proposal. As [CNN](#) reports, the proposed policy would allow pets to be evacuated with humans on transit authority vehicles and subway lines.

Pete Donohue of the *New York Daily News* reports that the city’s Office of Emergency Management “is concerned that without the ability to transport these animals, people may ignore evacuation orders.”

More:

Gary Kaskel, president of [United Action for Animals](#), said the TA is on the right track, pointing to the Katrina example.

But Kaskel said some of the proposed rules seem onerous - particularly requiring owners to have muzzles and veterinarian records in hand while gale-force winds are blistering the city and they are trying to escape.

“I think they will have to relax some of those requirements or they are going to have a lot of very angry New Yorkers confronting them during an emergency,” he said. “We all know the temperament of New Yorkers when they are told they can’t do something.”

“Am I really going to be expected to carry a muzzle for my 10-pound poodle?” he fumed. “That’s ridiculous.”

What’s ridiculous is the idea that scarce and precious capacity for evacuating humans is to be given to pets. Just look back to the disaster of Hurricane Katrina — when there was not sufficient capacity to evacuate human beings. Now, pets are to be added to the mix? This is a recipe for disaster — and a symptom of deep moral confusion.

The Christian worldview honors animals as demonstrating God’s glory in creation. They are wonderful gifts to humanity as well, offering us labor, companionship, and other good things. Pets are special gifts — but they are animals. A failure to distinguish between the nature of human beings and their pets is catastrophic — and perhaps even deadly.

Content Copyright © 2002-2010, R. Albert Mohler, Jr.