

Science - Reuters

California Considers Ban on Pet Cloning

Wed Feb 9, 6:48 PM ET

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - A California lawmaker said on Wednesday he would introduce a bill this week to ban sales of cloned pets, a move that could end a California company's plans to replicate beloved domestic animals.

A ban is necessary because the technology is unregulated and animal shelters are filled to capacity with potential pets, Assembly Member Lloyd Levine said in an interview.

"If you were to use animals for experiments, for agriculture, for all sorts of things, there are all sorts of regulations ... Who knows what's going to happen if these things get released into the wild?" Levine said.

The proposal follows the first pet cloning last year from Sausalito, California-based Genetic Savings & Clone Inc., which charges \$50,000 to clone a cat. The company in December revealed it had cloned a cat -- named Little Nicky after its progenitor Nicky -- for a client in Texas.

"Why do we need to pay \$50,000 for a cat?" Levine said. "We're not banning legitimate scientific research. We're simply banning the exploitation of vulnerable people."

The privately held company says it has four other cat clones in various stages of production and is developing a dog cloning service.

"The proposed ban is based on myths and science fiction and would neither improve animal welfare nor serve the interests of consumers," said Ben Carlson, a spokesman for Genetic Savings & Clone. "I have the impression Levine is pandering to animal rights advocates."