

2559

January 5, 2007

Sandra D. Gibson  
217 Edgewood Ave  
Saint Thomas, PA 17252

**Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement**  
**Attn: Ms. Mary Bender**  
**Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture**  
**2301 North Cameron Street**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408**

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

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Dear Mrs. Bender,

My name is Sandra Gibson and I am a Shih Tzu breeder. My grandmother started breeding Shih Tzus thirty-five years ago and has since passed ownership to my father; and in that same manner, our kennel will one day be passed down to me. Taking care of our dogs has been the focal point of my entire life and I am grateful everyday to be involved in what I believe to be an honorable and worthy pursuit of providing families with the joy of owning a Shih Tzu.

I am writing to comment on the proposed amendments to the Pennsylvania dog law regulations issued on December 16, 2006. As a responsible breeder and a lover of all dogs, I believe that inhumane and substandard kennel conditions should not be tolerated; however, I feel that the current regulations should already prevent kennels from inhumane practices. In my opinion, a number of the proposed changes to the regulations are impractical and would have devastating effects on the kennels which are currently compliant.

**Examples of problems with the proposal are the following:**

- \* The regulations will require wholesale renovation, if not rebuilding, of many kennels already built in compliance with current federal and/or state standards. There is no scientific foundation for the arbitrary, rigid engineering standards specified.
  
- \* Smaller breeders and dog owners who maintain their dogs in their own residential premises but are covered by the Pennsylvania dog law, who provide care and conditions far superior to those required by the proposed new standards, would be unable to comply with the rigid commercial kennel standards.
  
- \* The record keeping requirements with respect to exercise, cleaning, and other aspects of kennel management are excessively burdensome and serve no useful purpose, as it would be impossible to verify their accuracy in all but the most egregious circumstances. Such egregious circumstances already violate existing regulations.

\* There is no scientific or accepted husbandry basis for the amended space and exercise requirements.

\* If the dogs are being exercised in a safe contained area, it is impractical to require that someone supervise them for the duration of their exercise.

\* It is inhumane to force dogs to go outside during inclement weather, even with structures and provisions taken to protect the dogs from such conditions. It is not in the dogs' best interest to be submitted to temperatures well below freezing and it would be nearly impossible for a kennel operator to remove deep snow from a gravel exercise yard.

The above is far from a complete list of the deficiencies with the proposed regulations. I also associate myself with the more detailed comments on this proposal by the Pennsylvania Federation of Dog Clubs.

The Bureau has tacitly conceded that its current regulations have not been adequately enforced. If, after implementing its recently announced enhanced enforcement program, the Bureau finds it is still unable to prevent inhumane treatment of dogs because of specific deficiencies in the existing regulations, it should cite these specific deficiencies and propose changes based on them. The current proposal appears to be merely a laundry list of ideas for improving the environment for dogs that has no connection to specific instances in which the welfare of dogs could not be secured, and no basis in science or accepted canine husbandry practices. I urge that this proposal be withdrawn.

Sincerely,  
Sandra D. Gibson

