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Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement
Attention: Ms. Mary Bender
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
2310 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Ms. Bender,

I am a new resident & home owner in the Keystone State. Additionally, I am a professional trainer with over 25 years of experience teaching owners how to raise and train their dogs. I am a longstanding member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers as well as holding memberships/offices in other dog related clubs and associations. My decision to relocate to Pennsylvania was based on the fact that the laws governing dogs & dog oriented small businesses appeared to be based on common sense and a genuine concern for the welfare of Pennsylvania's dog population. Imagine my dismay—and concern, when made aware that proposed changes to PA dog laws were being considered.

Allow me to be adamant here: *I am steadfastly against the wholesale breeding of dogs solely as a "cash crop" to supply to Pet Stores or sold directly to the public by breeders whose sole purpose is profit and welcome steadfast regulation of such "Puppy Mill" businesses.*

That being said, in my experience, the proposed amendments will offer little to no relief from the public outcries against puppy millers. Worse yet, the "costs" of these proposals will be unduly borne by the pet owner, hobby breeder, professional trainers & Boarding Kennel operators who would bear the expenses of meeting the changes under consideration while those who mass market dogs without concern for the health or welfare of their dogs/puppies, will continue to operate "as usual", fully aware that *currently* existing regulations are not being enforced.

In addition, many of the purported, proposed changes are either impractical...while others, like those which would curtail hobby breeders from allowing puppies to be whelped in the comfort & security of the litter owner's home or those that specify revised "socialization" requirements, are in direct conflict with established facts about dog behavior.

Another reason that the task force might want to at least take pause of:

Thousands of Pennsylvania citizens participate in dog shows, agility and obedience trials held within the state every year, and many more thousands of out-of-towners come to Pennsylvania to attend dog shows. *According to a recent survey by the American Kennel Club, a weekend dog show could inject as much as \$1,075,000 into a local community!* Money goes to cover the costs of hotels, meals, gas, vendor purchases, etc. – Dollars going directly into Pennsylvania tills. It is reasonable to believe that the proposed amendments could negatively affect that dollar amount, as evidenced by dog breeders and hobbyists boycotting dog shows held in areas considering breed specific legislation.

Additionally, not only will undue expenses/burdens be incurred by small breeders and dog hobbyists if the proposed regulations (many contrary to good husbandry, appropriate socialization and training methodologies) are approved, but numerous small business owners (dog trainers, boarding kennels, DayCare facilities) may well be forced to close their doors, while the massive breeding mills, with large profits and poor public images continue on.

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Pennsylvania already has effective legislation in place to address the violations committed by large wholesale dealers of dogs, as evidenced by the very recent raid on a Lancaster Kennel. I question why more regulations are necessary. To paraphrase, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it"...just enforce it!

Respectfully,


Suzanne Schaefer Pollack

CC: Senator Jeffrey E Piccola
Hon Keith Gillespie
Governor Rendell