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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

223 Victoria Chase
Pottstown, PA 19465
January 9, 2007

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

Dear Mrs. Bender;

As a co-owner of six beautiful dogs who have or are currently participating in American Kennel Club events, I was very excited to learn that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was concerned about our puppy mill reputation and was interested in supporting the humane treatment of dogs. The horror of what was happening in my own Chester County last year was a travesty. All animals, not just dogs, are entitled to a good diet, clean water, clean living conditions, regular veterinary care and wonderful, loving human companionship.

Unfortunately, the proposed changes to the dog law regulations will not achieve these aims.

Having spent the last 10 years in and out of dog show arenas, I can assure you that these regulations which will have a punishing effect on the people who breed, raise and show quality animals is not what you should want to achieve. Throughout those years I have seen many times the love and concern that these individuals have for their animals. I have seen them devote their lives, their funds and their free time to making sure that each of their animals is happy and healthy.

I am concerned about your definition of "temporary housing", your space and exercise requirements, your rigid engineering standards for kennels, your regulations for small breeders and owners who maintain their dogs in their own residences and your regulations regarding housing and social interactions of dogs. I believe that these burdensome regulations will do nothing but force the caring and careful dog owners and breeders out of business. Those individuals who are already uncaring and unconcerned will certainly find some loophole or way to continue what they are already doing but in a more surreptitious fashion. You will drive away the caring individuals and encourage the uncaring ones to become more secretive. Given the popularity of owning a dog, this will provide no alternative for prospective pet buyers except to go to an unscrupulous breeder because that is all that will be left.

Occasionally, when I do have to travel without the three dogs that live with me, I leave them with a friend who has them living right in her home. And when we have someone

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else's dog that we are showing, he comes and lives with my dogs right in my house for a week or so. Your onerous regulations would prohibit this wonderful arrangement and leave us with no alternative but an expensive, cold and sterile environment for boarding our dogs. What a shame!

The dog owners and breeders and handlers I know are kind, caring and will do anything for a dog – even ones they don't know. I have seen entire dog shows stop because the electricity went out to the motorhomes and everyone wanted to go out and check on their dogs. I have seen a dog lovingly carried to a vet at a show because a bee stung it. I have seen 30 people stop what they were doing to catch a dog that got away from their owner for a brief moment. And I have, just recently, seen people brought to tears by the tragedy in Ohio when two dogs died in a van that was stolen and set on fire.


Please review your proposed dog law regulations again and eliminate those onerous sections that do not support the caring and concerned owners and breeders who want nothing more than the best for their breeds. Our Commonwealth would be best served by a comprehensive review of the 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. It appears that a good first step is to implement the recently announced enhanced enforcement program and determine if this enables the Bureau to prevent the inhumane treatment of dogs. If not, the Bureau should identify the specific deficiencies in the regulations and propose changes to address those deficiencies. A broad change in regulations that is not targeted to specific areas of deficiency seems excessively burdensome on both breeders and on those charged with enforcement of the regulations.

I urge that this proposal be withdrawn. It does no good for Pennsylvania to join Louisville, Kentucky or to be known as a state that is a terrible place to live if you love dogs.

Thank you, in advance, for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,



Karen K. Florentine

cc: State Senator Andrew Dinniman
State Senator John Rafferty, Jr.
State Representative Tim Hennessey
State Representative Carole Rubley