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January, 15 2007

3415 Athens Ct.
Hellertown, PA 18055

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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RECEIVED

Dear Ms. Bender:

I would like to tell you that we have been breeding and showing dogs in confirmation and obedience for almost 20 years now. We have Shetland sheepdogs (small dogs) and Siberian husky's (large dogs). Our dogs are part of our family; they live with us like our children. They live and play together, with the exception of when a bitch comes into season. We choose when to breed and with whom to breed to.

I am writing to comment on the proposed amendments to the Pennsylvania dog law regulations issued on December 16, 2006. I believe that inhumane and substandard kennel conditions should not be tolerated, but I do not agree that most of the proposed regulatory changes are needed, or would necessarily have a beneficial outcome if adopted. Many are impractical, excessively burdensome and costly, unenforceable, and/or will not improve the quality of life for the dogs in these kennels.

The definition of "temporary housing" would require thousands of small residential hobby and show breeding households to become licensed which could not possibly comply with the regulations, and which there is no reason to regulate.

The obligations of owners of "temporary housing" which are made subject to inspection by the proposal are not enumerated or limited.

There is no scientific or accepted husbandry basis for the amended space and exercise requirements. Limiting the size of the dogs who can exercise together is complete off the mark.

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. Would you like me to rebuild my house to comply? I think not.

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. We are not a commercial kennel, nor want to be. We breed for ourselves, and to promote the breed standard. For instance our whelping room is a bedroom in our house. Your law would prevent us from whelping there, but it is ok for people to sleep in.

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.

The dog limit of 26 dogs is unrealistic. Just imagine a birthday party, where children would come over and have fun. Well, when our dog friends come over, they also bring their dogs. In a year, who can determine how many dogs we have had on our property? As you can see the 26 dog rule is **TOTALLY UNREALISTIC**.

Exercising our dogs in a mud-proof area is so unrealistic, which means they cannot run in their fenced in yard. Do your children get dirty from playing? Why can my dogs not?

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. **WE URGE THIS PROPOSAL BE WITHDRAWN IMMEDIATELY.**

We all want the puppy mills to get closed down, but the state has already has the power to do so. So **DO IT** and close them down.

Please note that we met at the Harrisburg Dog Show a few months back, where I made my feelings known to you. There were 2000+ dogs at that show, with many more humans. These are the types of people and dogs that your law would affect. However it is the people who would mostly comply with it, because that is what we do. The type of people that the law needs to address, do now come to these types of shows, nor do their dogs comes up to the standard to be shown at these shows as well. I hope you and your colleges open up your eyes and see the light.

Sincerely yours,


Michael Spatz


Mary Spatz