

ELISSA J. KIRKEGARD

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January 16, 2007

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

Re: Pennsylvania Dog Law Regulations

Dear Ms. Bender:

I have lived in Bucks County, Pennsylvania on a farm since September, 1965. I have had numerous dogs, horses and cats since that time. I am a farmer and in those forty years, I have belonged to numerous clubs and organizations including AKC kennel clubs, MFH fox hunting clubs and the US Pony Club. I have been involved in many different aspects of dog ownership including breed, obedience, tracking, and field work. I am presently a member of the Bucks County Horse Park and the Irish Water Spaniel Club of America. I have a stud dog presently that I use in breeding programs and a Labrador Retriever which I run in field trials up and down the East Coast. I am a responsible dog owner and have always been.

I am distressed at the turn of events that has befallen the dog world in the past 40 years. I have followed the legislation and the agenda of "animal rights groups" and I believe it is to the detriment of all of us to allow a radical group to become involved and have influence on our politicians.

Most of all, I am so disappointed in Gov. Rendell who I actually voted for in November. If I had realized that PA was still talking about PAWS type legislation, I would never have voted for him. I am writing to comment on the proposed amendments to the PA dog law regulations issued on December 16, 2006. PA has a reputation for our "puppy mills" and that is distressing. They need looking in to but to attack the hobby breeders is just not the way to approach that problem.

Most breeders are doing the best they can to further their own breed. The last three dogs I have purchased have been raised in a home environment with lots of personal attention and as part of a family. To demand that hobby breeders have ridiculous record keeping requirements and all of those external buildings and holding areas is unreasonable and not aimed at the good of the animal. There are books written on the early days of a puppy and what it needs in terms of socialization and family interaction. Putting it in a sterile environment is equal to the orphanages that raised children with no human touch and or contact. They could not survive in our world and the puppies will do no better.

This is such a prime example of punishing many for the crimes of few. Our lives have already been altered tremendously from the crimes of the radicals who perpetuated 9/11. We live our lives surrounded by fear yet we were not the criminals but we are being punished. We are the responsible dog owners and breeders yet we are having unfair and ridiculous legislation imposed on us for the few that have made the breeding of dogs a commercial endeavor.

I am urging you and the other politicians to not listen to the radical animal rights groups. I am asking you to find the criminals and use your power to prosecute them. I urge you to forget this proposal and go about a sensible, humane approach to the problem. The hobby breeders are not the problem and energy, time and money is being wasted by going after them. Do not follow blindly by listening to the animal rights people with their vast resources. Listen to the Pennsylvania residents who are compassionate and caring about their animals and do not need to be regulated.

Sincerely,

Elissa J Kirkegard

Cc: Charles McIlhinney
Marguerite Quinn

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
COMMISSION

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