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

2007 JAN 18 AM 10:55

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Ms. Bender:

My name is Amy Benjamin and my husband and I live in Landenberg. We have had Irish Wolfhounds for over 30 years and consider ourselves ambassadors for dogs and dog breeding programs. We are active at the regional and National level in canine organizations. I am the President of our regional Irish Wolfhound Club, Vice President of the all breed Devon Dog Show Association and Vice President of the all breed Chester Valley Kennel Club. My husband is on the Board of both clubs and we are both active members of our National Irish Wolfhound Club, having both served on the Board. To that end you will find few people with less experience or compassion for protecting the purebred dog. I answer no less than 30 inquiries a month of prospective puppy buyers and it is indeed frightening how many would rather have "instant gratification" and will go to a substandard kennel to purchase a dog. To that end I see the need to have regulations but enforcing the ones in existence would be a better start than putting new regulations in place that put small knowledgeable breeders out of existence. We don't do this for the money!

Specifically 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.

Examples of problems with the proposal are the following:


- \* 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.
- \* 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.
- \* The proposals pertaining to housing and social interaction of dogs of different sizes are contrary to

good husbandry, socialization and training practices.

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,



Amy Benjamin and Doug Marx  
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Pennsylvania 19351