

2559

RECEIVED

Diane Koch
3725 Woodland Ave.
Drexel Hill PA 19026
Tel# 610-623-6729

2007 FEB -5 PM 1:26

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

January 25, 2007

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

Dear Ms Bender:

I am writing to you because I recently attended a dog show and was approached by other breeders. We were discussing the proposed changes that are possibly being made to the dog laws in Pennsylvania. We are very concerned about this new law since some of the changes could possibly hurt the way we take care of our dogs.

I have been in the Dog Fancy now for about 15 years. I enjoy showing my dogs. I take great care in studying pedigrees. This enables me to try to produce healthy, happy, well-adjusted companion dogs. It is quite difficult to produce dogs that have great temperaments, are healthy and are as close as possible to the correct standard. But I do my best. I feel what I do is important for families to have dogs that are wonderful companions and will live long and healthy lives. It makes me feel I am making a difference.

At this time I have shown 9 of my dogs to their championships. It is a wonderful hobby. My mom who is 71 is still going to the dog shows with me and also enjoys them very much. I do have 10 dogs in my home, which are like my children. Some are retired champions, others I am still showing. Some of the dogs I have shown to their championships are my breeding and are owned by other people. These dogs I have shown that others own do not live with me. It makes me proud that I am able to breed dogs that are worthy of AKC Championships.

I am currently in good standing with the AKC I am also a member of the Delaware Valley Havanese Club and the Greater New York Havanese Club, the PSCA, HSUS and support our local SPCA. I also am a volunteer for rescue in my area. I have given my information to our local SPCA should a dog be turned over to them. I would then contact the national Rescue and from there they would make arrangements for a foster home for that dog. I am currently and have been for years the registrar for the Philadelphia Dog Training Club.

I do understand that the law changes are hopefully intended for people who run puppy mills. About which I have heard some great horror stories. For example, the man in Oxford, PA. This

was a tragedy. I was contacted by a woman for help with her puppy that she had purchased from a man there. Her puppy was very sick and she went to great expense trying to get her better. She is now, thank goodness, finally healthy after six months of treatment.

I do feel that the public needs to be more educated. People are still going to places like Lancaster puppy mills to purchase dogs. A family across the street just purchased a chocolate lab from someone in Lancaster. They are still purchasing puppies in pet shops and buying sick puppies. Pet shops need to be pet shops that only supply the needs for animals.

----- NOT SELL THE ANIMALS----- This would put the mills out of business. When someone purchases a puppy from a pet shop, it just leaves a space for the next one to come in from a mill. I feel you should make it illegal for pet shop owners to sell dogs, this would send families to the shelters if they would like a new member for their family. Then there would be a lot less dogs in shelters. Brokers operate the same way. This should also be stopped. Maybe if the pet shops had a list of reputable breeders from the AKC, this would be helpful. The families then could deal directly with the dog breeder.

Mill breeders, brokers, back yard breeders and pet shops that sell these dogs need to be stopped, not the hobby breeder who takes great care of their dogs. Dog auctions should also be stopped. This is a horrible practice. A dog is not livestock, it is a family member. Breeders need to be careful to whom they sell their puppies. They need to check references. They need to try to match the best puppy to a certain family. They need to refuse families because they are not suited to purchase a dog. If more of that was practiced there would be a fewer dogs in shelters. I myself take great care, as a breeder should, in placing my puppies with the right families.

I hope you will consider my letter. If I could help in any way I would be happy to. I have never had a dissatisfied family who has taken one of my puppies. I still receive Christmas cards with pictures of my pups. I stay in contact with all my puppy owners and am there for them if they have a question or concern about their dog. I am there for them for the life of their puppy. I know many people who operate the same way and we are saddened when we don't hear from someone who has one of our puppies. If the family would ever have a problem and not be able to keep their dog I would happily take the puppy back. I have never had one of my puppies placed in a shelter.

When you make these changes in the dog laws, please consider the hobby breeder who is trying their best, working very hard from morning until night, trying to produce and show good quality dogs. This is a hobby, not one that brings in revenue for sure. It is a very expensive hobby, showing, grooming, and health testing, and numerous vet expenses just to make sure you produce healthy animals.

Please give my letter your consideration, it is important that you realize how a responsible breeder feels regarding these proposed changes.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Diane Koch