

January 29, 2007

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Sean & Barbara Finegan
225 Tapeworm Rd.
New Bloomfield, PA 17068

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

Dear Ms. Bender:

We have read of the proposed amendments to the PA Dog Law, and we would like to officially record our objections to these changes.

We are dog owners and do not plan on becoming breeders. However, after reading these proposed changes, we are frightened by their intentions. These restrictions are clearly written to benefit big business breeders, such as those who supply pet stores and have endless classified "puppies for sale" ads in the papers. Was that truly the intent? Did you really mean to destroy the occasional dog breeder who already is subject to enforcement if their record keeping and housing is not meeting state requirements? Did you sincerely mean to prevent dog clubs from having get-togethers, or to quash the entire local, tax-paying dog fancy? You know, the folks who hold dog shows and other events, who provide jobs and thousands of dollars to the state on a regular basis?

These changes will create a nightmare supply of dogs that are not health tested, and are not socialized; dogs that are sold to any unscreened home that puts up the cash. That is what will result from passing these amendments. We appreciate and are willing to pay for how much time, care, personal attention, and socialization that a small breeder expends in order to create a sane dog. No matter what the "staff-to-dog" ratio is at a big-time bulk breeding business, or how easy it is to wipe their surfaces clean or hose off the concrete on which their dogs spend their entire existence, it simply does not compare to the care, time, and socialization given by a small, local dog breeder who screens their potential puppy homes and **TAKES BACK** any dog who doesn't jell with its new owner. How many corporate dog breeders offer that service? How many socialize their pups to life? We can provide that answer for you: NONE of them do.

Don't we all want the same thing? To have a well-socialized, sane dog that can be taken anywhere in public without a problem? Do you honestly believe that a dog that has never seen grass, a vehicle, other dog breeds, strangers, a vacuum cleaner, loud noises, etc., and will over-react accordingly, can EVER be considered "sane"? These changes will create an entire industry of dogs that are being "saved from themselves" and as a result, will not ever be "sane" or "normally reactive" to the stress, strain, and surprises inherent in every day life. When they don't get a chance to experience it as pups, it has been proven since the 1970s that behavioural problems will happen when there is no proper socialization. (see Scott, Fuller, "Genetics and the Social Behavior of Dogs", Univ of Chicago Press)

It truly appears that the animal rights people have gotten their dirty hands into this. The obvious end game here is that NO dog resulting from these new "helpful" laws will be sane, and therefore, it will be SO SIMPLE to ban dog breeding, or certain dog breeds, forever. This is a big step towards meeting the stated goals of animal rights organizations such as PETA (please check their website, it's in plain English). The slippery slope is right outside your door. Please, please, please do not take that first step.

Please withdraw these amendments.

Please focus on enforcing the laws we already have. Better enforcement of what we already have in place will help PA to overcome its "puppy mill state" reputation, which is an honorable goal and one that we, as dog owners and taxpayers, fully support.

Do you realize that these changes promote puppy mills? Large-scale breeding of untested, unsocialized dogs IS a puppy mill, no matter how clean it is.

We understand that budget constraints don't always allow for the kind of enforcement you'd like to see, we get that. But these proposed changes carry so much potential destructive effect, we respectfully request that your budget be directed towards enforcing the current laws. **Please spend your considerable talents & energies enforcing the laws already in place.**

Thank you for your time and consideration,


Sean & Barbara Finegan

CC: Hon. Jake Corman, Senate Box 203034, Harrisburg, PA 17120-3034
CC: Hon. Mark Keller, 5 East Wing/PO Box 202086, Harrisburg, PA 17120-2086
CC: Arthur Coccodrilli, Chairman, Independent Regulatory Review Commission, 333 Mkt St., 14th Floor, Hbg. PA 17101/Reg ID #2-152 (#2559)
CC: via email, PA Federation of Dog Clubs

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