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January 22, 2007

12 Morris Road

Port Matilda, PA 16870

Ms. Mary Bender

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

2301 North Cameron Street

Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408

Re. Doc. No. 06-2452

RECEIVED
2007 FEB -1 AM 9:26
INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
FIELD/COMMISSION

Dear Ms. Bender,

It has been brought to my attention about the newly proposed amendments to the PA dog law regulations. As the owner of five companion/performance dogs and a small scale hobby breeder, I am writing to express my concerns and opposition to the proposed changes.

I purchased my foundation dogs directly from a reputable breeder, not a pet shop or large-scale commercial kennel, because I wanted the best chance at getting a healthy dog with a good temperament. I wanted to know that my puppy had been exposed to a variety of normal household situations and was prepared to live the life of a family companion as well as a top show/performance prospect. By buying directly from another hobby breeder, I was able to see the conditions in which my dogs were raised.

The proposed changes, particularly those applying to Kennels- Primary Enclosures, are of particular concern to me. It is my understanding that in these proposed changes, if a cumulative total of 26 dogs are housed at the Establishment during a calendar year, then licensed breeders will be required to have housing facilities that comply with the specifications outlined in the proposed changes. Small scale dog breeders who fall into the class 1 designation, would no longer be able to maintain, breed, whelp or raise their dogs within their homes. The small hobby breeders who strive to produce dogs which are of true breed type, of good temperament, and, inasmuch as possible, free from genetic disorders, would be forced to either restrict their numbers or build facilities to meet the standards.

As a small hobby breeder, I credit my dog's good temperament to thoughtful breeding and to the love and attention that I give my puppies. Most importantly, this included exposure to everyday sights and sounds, such as:

1. My puppies go outside to potty on grass regularly. This is of importance to me, as it helps with the housebreaking process.
2. In a home situation, my puppies are exposed to different surfaces and noises such as kitchen appliances, television and other noises that occur in my home.
3. My puppies are given the opportunity to interact with other dogs, my children and even a cat which helps with socialization.

While I applaud the efforts to improve the living conditions for the dogs and puppies being raised in commercial facilities, I find it a great disservice to the reputable breeder, who standards far surpass in many ways, what these proposed amendments mandate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donalee McElrath". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Donalee McElrath

Nitani Australian Shepherds