

Dear Ms. Bender:

I, as a dog owner and show competitor, work with my dogs daily. I attend many shows a year and I work to better my breed. I am Pattie Zapf, and I own Australian Shepherds. My dogs do a variety of dog sports and are in no way "just breeding dogs." I speak for the lot of many show breeder when I say the new proposed bill is not just problematic but also unable to be withheld. I run agility with my dogs as well as compete in conformation, rally, obedience, and I train in herding, flyball, dock jumping, freestyle, and tracking. All of these sports take time and to breed a litter is hard enough. Now with added costs, it is nearly impossible. Mind you, these are dogs from respectable and responsible breeders and well established lines and kennels. These are not puppy mill dogs or backyard breeder dogs. These are dogs from champion lines that prove their worth not just at home but also in the breed ring.

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. If worse comes to worst, I would rather take my dogs to a place they can have "rights" and myself have "rights" than stay in a state such as this that tries to "control" the lives of dog owners.

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.

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVISIONS

2007 FEB -1 AM 9:27

RECEIVED

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 yours,

Pattie Zapf