

2001 Tea Island Court
Odenton, MD 21113

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

January 23, 2007

Dear Ms. Bender,

My name is Jessica Clark and I live in Odenton, Maryland with my husband and two purebred AKC certified Shetland Sheepdogs, Kiwi and Beacan. I am writing in regard to the newly proposed amendments to the Pennsylvania dog law regulations issued on December 16, 2006. As the owner of these two companion dogs, I am writing to express my concerns and opposition to the proposed changes.

I purchased my dogs directly from reputable breeders. I purchased Beacan from a small hobby and show residential breeder in Pennsylvania (and Kiwi from a small hobby and show residential Maryland breeder). After we had Kiwi for about six months, we decided to get another Sheltie. I did not even consider purchasing a puppy from a pet shop or large-scale commercial kennel because I wanted the best chance at getting a healthy dog with a good temperament. I also 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. By buying directly from a Pennsylvania small residential breeder, I was able to see the conditions in which my puppy was raised because I went to the breeder's home and visited with her and the puppies before taking my new puppy home. Her home was clean and there was plenty of space for the puppies. The older dogs were kept in a separate area and that space was also clean and large enough for the number of dogs she had. We have been completely happy with our puppy – Beacan – who is now a full-grown almost-three-year-old. He has had no health problems and has added joy to our lives.

The proposed changes to PA dog regulations, particularly those applying to “Kennels-Primary Enclosures,” are of particular concern to me. It is my understanding that under 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. Under this scheme, small scale breeders who fall into the class 1 designation (like the one I purchased Beacan from in Pennsylvania) would no longer be able to maintain, breed, whelp or raise their dogs within their homes. These small residential breeders who strive to (and do) produce dogs which are true to 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 which would negatively impact the

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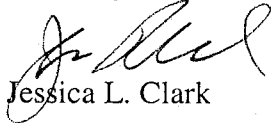
puppies' development. Both of these outcomes are unwarranted and would not result in any improvements to breeding.

I credit Beacan's good temperament and health to thoughtful breeding and to the love and attention that my breeder gave my puppy. Most importantly, this included exposure to everyday sights and sounds, such as:

- 1) My puppy was taken outside to potty on grass regularly. This was important because it helped with the housebreaking process.
- 2) In a home situation, my puppy was exposed to different surfaces and noises such as kitchen appliances, television and other noises that occur in my home. This helped him make an easy adjustment to the move to my house.
- 3) My puppy was given regular opportunities to interact with other dogs, helping with social skills needed to meet other dogs we come in contact with, including Kiwi, the dog we already had at home.

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 home breeders to propose changes that would not allow them to continue raising their dogs in environments that, in many cases, far surpass what these proposed amendments mandate. I want the choice to buy from a small scale, reputable breeder, and oppose these amendments.

Sincerely,



Jessica L. Clark