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Ms. Mary Bender
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408

Re: Doc. No. 06-2452

Dear Ms. Bender,

It has been brought to my attention the newly proposed amendments to the Pennsylvania Dog Law regulations. As the owner of several companion dogs, I am writing to express my concerns and opposition to the proposed changes.

I purchased my dog 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 well adjusted and prepared to live the life of a family companion. By buying directly from a breeder, I was able to see the conditions in which my puppy was raised.

Also, the breeder that I chose gives health guarantees -- most pet shops, large-scale facilities, puppy mills, and "backyard breeders" subscribe to the "buyer beware" or the "you get what you pay for" philosophy. Unlike K-Mart, once you make the purchase, there are no returns. Some reputable breeders have the new owners sign a contract outlining what they expect from the new owners for the puppy and what the breeder promises. My breeder (and several breeders that I know) guarantees that her puppies are free from genetic defects; if, by chance, there is a health problem that could be genetic, she will either give me my money back or I can choose another puppy from a future litter. Also, if something happens in the future that I cannot care for my dog, she has it in her contract that I can return the dog to her and she will refund my purchase price; this keeps her dogs out of the Humane Societies or other shelters. If breeders like these - that believe in what they produce - stop breeding because they cannot comply with the new regulations, this industry would suffer a huge loss.

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 breeders who fall into the class 1 designation, would no longer be able to maintain, breed, whelp, or raise their dogs within their homes. These breeders, who strive to 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. Some reputable breeders may decide that they cannot provide the accommodations needed and will no longer breed; this will limit choices when looking for a puppy. The small scale breeder would probably have to raise the price of their puppies accordingly to pay for a commercial-type facility; this would broaden the gap between the reputable breeder (who is trying to improve the breed) and the "backyard breeder" who is only in it for the money and can stay under the 26-dog limit.

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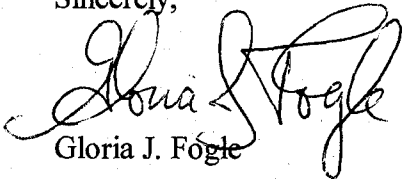
I have several friends who are reputable breeders of various breeds. They raise their puppies in their homes to make it easier for the puppy to adjust when the new owners take him/her home. I credit my dog's good temperament to thoughtful breeding and to the love and attention that my breeder gave my 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 is of importance to me, as 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.
- 3) My puppy was given opportunities to interact with other dogs, helping with social skills needed to meet other dogs we come in contact with.

I believe that something needs to be done to curtail the "puppy mills." 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, whose standards far surpass in many ways what these proposed amendments mandate. I, for one, want the choice to buy from a small scale, reputable breeder, and oppose these amendments.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,



Gloria J. Fogle