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Ms. Mary Bender
Pennsylvania Dept. of Agriculture
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408
RE Doc No 062452

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2007 FEB 20 PM 3:33

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Ms, Bender,

We have learned that the newly proposed dog law, which we thought would be helpful in solving Pennsylvania's Lancaster Puppy Mill problem is instead targeting the small responsible breeders who truly love and care for their dogs as family members instead of livestock for profit.

For 40 years, we have purchased our dogs from small Pennsylvania breeders who were nationally recognized in their breed. They raised their puppies and housed their adult dogs in loving homes. This has insured that our dogs were well tempered, well socialized pets able to live in the community without incident. Home breeder's boast with good reason that their pups are exposed to children, household noises and situations, and learn to relieve themselves outdoors rather than in a crate 24/7. We know people who have been unable to resist the puppy mill puppy in the window. They have had medical issues galore as well as serious temperament problems. Many of these dogs are turned over to shelters and killed as unsuitable for adoption.

We are concerned about the "Kennel Primary Enclosure" section of this proposal. If a "cumulative total of 26 dogs are housed in a year" the breeder must build housing to meet the proposed specifications. This is unfair. There is no appreciable money to be made from dogs bred by home breeders. They are involved in their breed to better the breed and allow those of us who want a particular breed of dog to obtain a healthy one. We have found it interesting that a quality, caring breeder will sell a pup for much less money than a puppy mill pet store dog. And yet home breeders are so concerned of their dogs' futures that one must literally provide multiple references to purchase as well as photos of the prospective owner's yard. Where else do you find a seller that consistently will allow you to return the dog just to ensure its well-being? One of our breeders drove to North Carolina to pick up a dog she had bred that the buyers no longer could care for rather than have it turned over to a shelter. These home breeders frequently put their animals' welfare above their own, exhibiting the highest standard of responsible dog ownership. Their dogs are not bred until they die. The only reference the puppy mill breeder/pet store seller requires is CASH.

We truly hope as taxpayers of many years who have NEVER called or written a letter to anyone in government that you will adjust this bill to address the real problem of people who raise puppies in cages in barns with no human contact to be sold to anyone who hands them cash as though they were livestock.

If Pennsylvania passes this law you will merely force responsible dog buyers to other states. We will not purchase a puppy mill dog.

Research continues to cite the health benefits of dogs as pets. Surely, we can adjust this proposal to target the group that it was intended to correct, and has made Lancaster synonymous with cruelty. And not the home breeders who care enough to allow their dogs into their homes as family members.

Thank you for your consideration,

Carol Williams
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