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207 Fernvue Drive
Coraopolis, PA 15108
March 7, 2007

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

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
COMMISSION
PENNSYLVANIA

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Dear Ms Bender,

This is to inform you that as a lifelong Democrat, I strongly **oppose** the changes in the Pennsylvania dog law which are being considered by the state. I am disturbed by the method through which the changes are being made and even more disturbed by the substance of the changes. The way in which this is being done eliminates the voters and their legislative representatives by going directly to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. The changes are reminiscent of the Puppy Protection Act which was sponsored by Senator Santorum and defeated in the United States House of Representatives. I fully realize that there have been some horrible conditions in some Pennsylvania breeding facilities, but please, let us not throw the baby out with the bath water. There are also a great many extremely reputable breeders who breed for love, not money. They assume responsibility for the dog for its entire life and agree to find a new home any dog that they breed should its owners not be able to care for it. Most of these are so called hobby breeders who would be unable to comply with the overly stringent regulations. The proposed regulations are burdensome, unaffordable, and in some cases, such as regulations pertaining to the whelping of puppies, not in the interest of the dogs. Overall, they would not improve the lives of the dogs they are meant to protect.

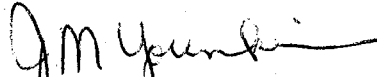
Those of us who show our dogs in conformation, agility, obedience, field trials, and other competitive events have dedicated our lives to the well being of dogs. My wife and I spend many hours talking to people who are interested in purchasing a well bred dog and explaining what is involved in the purchase and care of these animals. We also refer to appropriate rescue organizations. We do this out of a sense of responsibility. The only reimbursement we receive is the knowledge that we have been helpful.

Please let us not confuse Animal Welfare with Animal Rights. Small breeders who have their facilities in their homes and/or their non-commercial hobby kennels are able to socialize and care for their puppies in a way that large commercial kennels cannot do. Yet most of these breeders would be unable to conform to these regulations. Please do not mandate facilities that only a corporation can afford.

It does not benefit the dogs or the people who adopt these dogs as members of their families. It will result in the "puppy mills" you are trying to prohibit.

Your agency makes it appear it is the intent of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania do away with the responsible breeding of dogs? I hope not.

Sincerely,



James M. Younkens

cc:

Governor Edward G Rendell
Senator John Pippy
Representative Mark Mustio