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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

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Broad River Animal Hospital
89 New Canaan Ave
Norwalk, CT 06850

March 6, 2007

Arthur Coccodrilli, Chairman
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr Coccodrilli,

I am writing concerning the proposed changes to the Pennsylvania dog kennel requirements. I strongly urge you to support these changes. I am a Connecticut veterinarian who has been practicing for 17 years. Unfortunately, I see first hand the poor conditions that dogs from large kennels (puppy mills) come from. Just in the last year alone I have seen two clients lose young puppies from pneumonia (one spent \$5000 trying to save their puppy before it died). Two other clients spent \$3000-\$5000 on puppies with pneumonia shortly after being purchased. One of which a year later still has a chronic lung infection and has been diagnosed with a congenital immune deficiency. Because of her illness spaying had to be delayed after her first heat and now is at 100 times the risk of developing mammary cancer as she ages. Two other puppies were diagnosed with congenital liver conditions. Another puppy is currently being treated for sarcoptic mange. In 17 years I have never seen any of these conditions in one single purebred dog from a reputable breeder. Most of the puppy mill puppies I see come to me with 2-4 different intestinal parasites and/or external parasites (ear mites, for example), which is inexcusable considering the \$1200 or more these puppies are sold for. All of these conditions are a result of large scale breeding: unsanitary conditions and no consideration of genetic defects in the breeding process.

I applaud Governor Rendell and other's commitment to making these large scale breeding facilities more humane and sanitary and cracking down on violators. Any regulations which give these poor dogs whose entire life is spent locked in a cage until they are no longer able to breed a better life must be implemented. The public also deserves to be buying healthy puppies.

I know that many breeding clubs and other supposed animal organizations are opposing these regulations. I have been to the home of many reputable breeders in my career. The conditions these dogs live in all far exceed those outlined in the proposed regulation changes. The only breeders that will be hurt are those currently providing inhumane conditions for their dogs. Two articles opposing the new regulations had the following to

say: The PA Farm Bureau opposes this legislation because "dogs would be required to be provided water at all times of the day or night" and the PA Federation of Dog Clubs opposed the legislation because the new regulations require a dog kennel be large enough to allow a dog lie on its side or back with legs fully extended. Their response was "any time I've seen a dog lying with its legs sticking straight out, it's dead". Even a non dog lover would agree that water and a place to lie down are basic necessities for a dog which lives out its entire life in a cage!

I also know that some humane organizations have opposed the legislation fearing that it might disable their operations. Please exempt humane organizations (shelters, rescue and foster groups) from the proposed legislation, not because these dogs and puppies should live in less humane conditions, but these facilities are often only temporary and not life long facilities for these dogs so minimum space requirements and other regulations may not apply.

The proposed regulations include the following:

- doubling the minimum cage size
- requiring daily exercise outside of the cage
- required heat when the temperature drops below 50 degrees
- required cooling (by fan or air conditioning) when the temperature rises above 85 degrees
- improving ventilation in kennel areas
- denying kennel licenses to individuals convicted of animal cruelty within the past 10 years

I urge you to pass this important legislation. Please make Pennsylvania a leader in humane care for dogs.

Sincerely,



Michele K Lamothe, DVM
Veterinarian