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March 12, 2007

Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement  
Attn: Ms Mary Bender  
PA Department of Agriculture  
2301 N Cameron St  
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408

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MAR 20 REC'D

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Ms. Bender:

For the past 11 years, I have been very involved with dogs and I wish to express my concerns about the December 16, 2006 proposed legislation regarding the breeding of dogs.

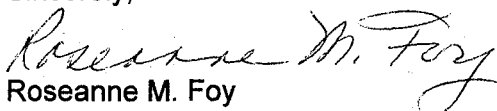
For 5 ½ years, I was employed as a service dog trainer for Susquehanna Service Dogs which breeds, raises & trains dogs to assist people with mobility & hearing disabilities. Prior to my employment with Susquehanna Service Dogs, I was a volunteer with that organization for 5 years, doing whatever was needed – housing dogs, working privately with problem dogs or doing administrative work. As an employee, in addition to training adult dogs to become service dogs, I also raised puppies in my home to become service dogs & coordinated all the families who were puppyraisers. My responsibilities included teaching all puppy classes, arranging all veterinarian appointments, maintaining medical records for each puppy & handling any & all problems associated with raising a puppy.

In 1998, 2000 & 2002, I whelped 3 litters of puppies for service dogs in my home, raising them to the age of 8 weeks, socializing them to somewhere in the area of 200 people, teaching them to potty on command & exercising them several times a day in my yard in the company of my older dogs. Most of those 26 puppies went on to become service dogs & are currently working with disabled people throughout Pennsylvania; one is working as a drug dog in the Pennsylvania Prison System. I firmly believe that the careful breeding choices, the varied human contact & the environmental exposure the puppies received in those first weeks of life, helped them to become the well-adjusted & confident working dogs they grew to be.

I have since become a hobby breeder, breeding my Labrador Retriever with proper health clearances according to Labrador Retriever specifications. Whelping the litter in my living room, I provide sensory stimulation to the puppies from the day after birth until they are adopted into their new homes. The puppies also have the necessary health clearances before they leave my home. They learn to climb a step, walk on top of a picnic table, play with a ball, wade in a baby swimming pool, follow my older dogs around the yard, be held in various positions by human beings & interact with children. Learning experiences like these, vital to a well-adjusted family pet, won't happen if the conditions in the proposal are met as written.

In 2005, I began training pet dogs privately & have worked firsthand with many dogs that have come from puppy mills. Starting life in the horrible conditions they are born into isn't the way life should be for any of God's creatures. Yes, the puppy mills need to be stopped but please, don't take away the opportunity for caring hobby breeders like myself to make a difference in the life of a family. Please reconsider the proposed amendments to the PA dog law regulations proposed on December 16, 2006 and pass or enforce legislation that would eliminate the deplorable conditions in PA's puppy mills without affecting the conscientious hobby breeder. Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

  
Roseanne M. Foy

CC: Representative David S Hickernell  
Senator David J. Brightbill  
Hon. Edward G. Rendell