

CANINE RESCUE

2559

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

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DEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Ms. Bender,

I am writing regarding the proposed changes to Dog Law Regulations, Title 7 of the PA Code, Chapters 21,23,25, &27.

I am the president of Canine Rescue of Central PA, Inc. and respectfully submit the following comments on the proposed regulatory changes. Canine Rescue of Central PA, Inc. appreciates the effort to guarantee the humane treatment of all dogs in Pennsylvania. We do, however, have some grave concerns regarding the proposed regulations as currently published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

Canine Rescue of Central PA, Inc. is a non-profit, no kill, all volunteer organization dedicated to providing assistance to any dog in a helpless situation. It is our mission to provide sanctuary, shelter, and ultimately find loving families for as many dogs in helpless situations as we can. We normally have a few dogs in foster homes at any given time. These are our dogs with special needs. The majority of our dogs are housed in small boarding kennels. You will find the same story with many of Pennsylvania's rescue organizations. There is a symbiotic relationship between rescues such as ours and the small boarding kennels in the state. We are given greatly reduced rates for boarding our dogs in exchange for utilizing those kennel runs every day of the year. This provides the rescues with a cost effective way of housing our dogs and provides the boarding kennels with guaranteed income during times between vacation seasons and holiday weekends when boarding demand is reduced. Therefore if regulations are established which force the smaller boarding kennels out of business, the rescue organizations depending on them will likewise be forced to close. Is this not counterproductive to the idea of improving living conditions for Pennsylvania's dogs? Many of the dogs we rescue come to us from abhorrent conditions. I have personally been involved in teaching two dogs to walk after they had spent their lives tied to trees on three foot chains. We have rescued dogs living in overturned refrigerators and in cars. Some are strays, having been abused, neglected or abandoned along Pennsylvania's roadways. The kennel managers we work with are scrupulous in their care and cleaning of their kennel facilities. Our volunteers see to daily exercise needs. Adoptive families are screened as to compatibility with an individual dog's needs or issues. Home visits are made to assure our dogs are going into situations far better than those they came from. We consider it our responsibility to socialize and work on training our dogs in preparation for their forever home. We stand ready to comply with reasonable regulations. We feel the proposed regulation changes are onerous and overreaching. And would hope that the end result of this review process gives the dogs of Pennsylvania humane treatment without putting vast numbers of good boarding kennels and rescue organizations out of business. Our goal is to increase the number of dogs receiving services from us. This can be achieved only with

HELPING DOGS IN HELPLESS SITUATIONS

ALL VOLUNTEER

ALL BREED

NO KILL

reasonable regulation.

Specifically, the comments we have on the proposed regulation changes are as follows:

Sections 21.1 Definitions and 21.14 Kennel Licensure Provisions – Large commercial breeders, Hobby breeders, Non breeding boarding kennels, All rescues, and foster homes are all placed under one definition of “Establishment” and therefore are all held to the same regulatory standard. How does a foster home temporarily housing one dog equate to a commercial breeder housing many dogs in both indoor and outdoor facilities? Our dogs in foster care already live in family homes. They live in the very same spaces and conditions as the human members of the family. Further, by defining foster homes as “Regulated Establishments” the regulations are putting them at odds with municipalities zoning regulations. Many over zealous zoning officers will be ruling a regulated establishment being located in a residential area as illegal.

Section 21.23 and Section 21.24 referencing exercise and outdoor exercise area criteria. And 21.23 - Space/Exercise (i) requires 20 minutes daily of leash walking or placement in exercise areas. (ii) exercise area criteria in conjunction with 21.24 (b) (8) Outdoor exercise areas : The reading of the above referenced sections infer that grass is prohibited in play yards. One boarding kennel we use has two play yards encompassing three thousand square feet. Utilizing either cement or the layered stone flooring stipulated would be totally cost prohibitive. This then would eliminate the usage of the play yards and limit the dogs exercise to leash walking. The result would be a reduction in the quality of life for them.

Section 21.24 (11)(ii) “Floor or surface gutters must be at least six inches in diameter.” The small boarding kennels we work with are constructed to residential standards. All drainage piping is under the cement flooring and constructed with four inch pipes. Virtually all homes in Pennsylvania are constructed with four inch diameter sanitary piping throughout the house and out to the connection with the municipal sewer. Requiring six inch drains would be cost prohibitive as cement flooring would have to be broken up and restored from one end of the buildings to the other.

Section 21.24 (f)(11)(iii) Requires half round pipe in six inch diameter to be installed between indoor and outdoor runs. This is an unreasonable requirement where kennels are already constructed with indoor and outdoor sections already sloped in opposing directions to avoid cross contamination. This would not only be cost prohibitive but also cause construction problems in addition to a safety concern for the dogs. By cutting a trough into the cement to install the six inch pipe the integrity of the cement slab would be breached thereby creating a free floating exterior section. The normal freeze/thaw cycle every winter would cause breakage of the plastic pipe or extrusion of the expansion joints. In addition the sections would be prone to becoming misaligned. In addition to being a tripping hazard for the dogs in good weather, this half pipe would be prone to have fluids freeze in wintertime before it could properly drain causing further health and safety issues.

Section 21.27 (a)(1) The lighting regulation seems to be excessive, especially in prep areas. At the 70 foot candle level, I would have to install eight hundred seventy five watts in an area the size of my home kitchen.

Section 21.41 regarding record keeping. Excessive paperwork regulations will be unenforcible.

Fiscal Impact – Private Sector. The estimated costs listed are greatly underestimated. In reality, the actual costs of compliance with these proposed regulations would force many small boarding kennels out of business. The rescue organizations dependent upon them for housing would cease to exist. Ultimately, the dogs depending on those rescue organizations would continue to suffer.

Fiscal Impact – General Public. This section states that there would be no fiscal impact on the general public. This is an erroneous statement. Any costs to Pennsylvania boarding kennels will be passed on in the form of higher boarding fees. Higher boarding fees taking a larger share of limited rescue funding translates into fewer dogs receiving services.

Respectfully,



Loring L. Thomas
President
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cc:

Arthur Coccodrilli, Chairman
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