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Ms. Mary Bender
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408

2007 FEB -8 AM 11:15

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
COMMISSION

Re: Doc. No. 06-2452

Dear Ms. Bender,

It has been brought to my attention the newly proposed amendments to the Pennsylvania Dog Law regulations. As a reputable breeder of companion dogs, I am writing to express my concerns and opposition to the proposed changes.

The proposed changes, particularly those applying to "Kennels-Primary Enclosures", are of particular concern to me. It is my understanding that in these proposed changes, if a cumulative total of 26 dogs are housed at "the Establishment" during a calendar year, then licensed breeders will be required to have housing facilities that comply with the specifications outlined in the proposed changes. Small scale breeders who fall into the class 1 designation, would no longer be able to maintain, breed, whelp, or raise their dogs within their homes. Breeders who strive to produce dogs which are true to breed type, of good temperament, and, inasmuch as possible, free from genetic disorders, would be forced to either restrict their numbers or build facilities to meet the standards.

When I added onto my kennels, I added areas where I could whelp and house my puppies; however, I have never used this area for that purpose. I choose to whelp and raise the puppies in my home. When the puppies are first born and for the next couple of weeks, I check on them regularly to make sure that they are not too cold or too warm, that the area is clean, that the mother doesn't lay on top of them (especially a new mother), that their feces is clear of parasites and smells normal, that they are all getting a chance to nurse, etc. It is much easier to keep closer watch on them when they are in my home with me than to keep going out into the kennels; I feel that the litter gets more attention and I notice abnormalities much quicker if they happen. As the puppies get older, they get to interact with my older dogs, who teach them "manners" and socially acceptable behaviors. Besides being a breeder, I am also a certified dog trainer. I teach my puppies basic obedience and desirable behaviors (like no jumping, patience, taking a treat nicely from your hand, etc.) from about three weeks until the new owners take them home. This would not be as successful if they were not in the house with me; because puppies have such a short attention span, I work with them intermittently all day.

As a breeder, I want my puppies to be exposed to a variety of normal household situations and be prepared to live the life of a family companion. Most importantly, this includes exposure to everyday sights and sounds, such as:

- 1) Being able to take a puppy outside to potty on grass regularly. This helps with the housebreaking process.
- 2) In my home, a puppy is exposed to different surfaces and noises such as kitchen appliances, television, and other noises that occur in a home.

- 3) A puppy is given opportunities to interact with other dogs, helping with social skills needed to meet other dogs it comes in contact with when he/she goes to their new home. The home may have another dog(s), cat(s), or other animals with which the puppy has to cohabitate.

As a trainer, I see many different behavior problems. Puppies that are not well socialized become adults that are apprehensive, submissive, or possibly aggressive towards other dogs. I see dogs that people bought from advertisements in the newspaper or in The Traders Guide because they cost less than going to a breeder; a lot of these dogs have temperament problems and/or health problems. I, and many other breeders, give guarantees on health and temperament; if there is a genetic health or a temperament problem, the owner can return to the dog to me and I will refund the purchase price of the dog or they can choose a puppy from a future litter. Most reputable breeders test and certify the parents for various genetic defects (hips, eyes, elbows, heart, etc.) to improve the chances of the puppies being defect-free; this is something the large-scale commercial facilities, pet stores, and puppy mills do not do. If you make the proposed restrictions, some of the reputable breeders, who typically breed to improve the breed-type, will either breed less or not at all. This means that the large-scale facilities and puppy mills will probably take their place.

While I applaud the efforts to improve the living conditions for the dogs and puppies being raised in commercial facilities, I find it a great disservice to the reputable breeder, whose standards far surpass in many ways what these proposed amendments mandate. As a reputable breeder, I oppose these amendments.

Sincerely,



Lois Fogle
Fogle's Dog Training and Boarding