



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

The Honorable Jeff Barker
Chairman, House Committee on Business and Labor
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE, H-480
Salem, Oregon 97301

March 18, 2019

RE: AKC Supports Consumer Choice, Urges Caution in Promoting Unregulated Sources of Pets

Dear Chairman Barker and Members of the House Committee on Business and Labor:

On behalf of tens of thousands of responsible dog owners and future dog owners in Oregon, the American Kennel Club (AKC) wishes to share our grave concerns with House Bill 2804-5. The bill, through its proposed amendment, will create an outright ban on the retail sale of dogs and cats, limiting consumer choice.

The AKC shares public concerns about the wellbeing of all pets. For over 135 years, the AKC has been a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the health and wellbeing of all dogs, and our clubs operate the largest purebred rescue network in the nation. We advocate for responsible dog ownership through education and support strong enforcement of the Federal Animal Welfare Act, including the 2014 retail pet store rule requiring breeders who sell pets sight unseen or to pet stores to be inspected and meet federal animal welfare requirements.

We are extremely concerned that this proposed legislation as amended ignores existing protections in Oregon and seeks to ban the retail sale of dogs and cats from licensed, inspected and regulated breeders, or from retailers selling such pets. This proposal exacerbates animal welfare issues in the community because it removes from the market the most regulated, health-tested and temperament-checked sources of pets. Consumer protections currently afforded to new pet owners in Oregon would be stymied by this legislation, which also has the potential to increase public health risks affecting the entire community.

An important part of ensuring the success of a pet with a new owner is to make certain that it is an appropriate fit with the owner's lifestyle. Treasured pets may be obtained from a variety of sources, including breeders, rescues, local shelters, and pet stores. Unfortunately, most communities lack sufficient local breeders to meet the demand for the specific pets desired by local residents. Those seeking a puppy that is a specific breed from a breeder subject to USDA or state animal welfare standards, or one that is covered by Oregon consumer protection laws, will likely be forced to purchase a puppy outside the community, or to obtain a shelter puppy of unknown origin with no health guarantees.

If efforts to continue restricting pet sales succeed, families in Oregon will lose an important source for choosing a quality pet that is the best fit for their lifestyle and circumstances. When consumers cannot acquire a pet that is an appropriate fit for their lifestyle, that animal is more likely to end up in the shelter system.

If Oregon wishes to enact a policy that protects consumers, we encourage you to pursue a policy similar to the one adopted by the State of Connecticut. Their law prohibits pet stores or dealers from purchasing animals from any breeder that has violated USDA animal welfare regulations related to animal health or welfare. These legislative safeguards not only preserve consumer choice but also protect both animal welfare and businesses in your community.

The American Kennel Club joins our Oregon federation, the National Animal Interest Alliance, and other concerned parties in opposition to this bill that proposes a ban on retail pet sales.

I would welcome the opportunity to work with you or other stakeholders to develop alternative and more effective solutions to reduce shelter intakes, expand responsible dog ownership and promote responsible pet choice in Oregon. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 919-816-3587 or by email at Robert.Miller@akc.org if you have any questions or if I may be of assistance.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Robert Miller
Legislative Analyst/Community Outreach Coordinator

Founded in 1884, the American Kennel Club (AKC) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit purebred dog registry dedicated to promoting responsible dog ownership, advocating for dogs as family companions, advancing canine health and well-being, and working to protect the rights of all responsible dog owners. The AKC represents more than 5,100 dog clubs nationally, including 100 clubs in Oregon. In 2018, AKC licensed and sanctioned nearly 800 events in Oregon, in which more than 73,000 dogs participated.