

Burger, Kathryn (CI-StPaul)

From: Phil Guidry <Phil.Guidry@akc.org>
Sent: Wednesday, December 5, 2018 3:14 PM
To: *CI-StPaul_Contact-Council
Subject: The American Kennel Club Supports Freedom of Pet Choice



Phil M. Guidry, J.D.
Director, Policy Analysis
Government Relations

Wednesday, December 5, 2018

Saint Paul City Council
15 Kellogg Blvd. West, 310 City Hall
Saint Paul, MN 55102

RE: The American Kennel Club Supports Freedom of Pet Choice

Dear Saint Paul Council Members:

The American Kennel Club (AKC) writes to share our grave concerns with current efforts to ban the retail sale of pets from regulated breeders and promote only the sale of pets sourced from shelter or rescue distributors.

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

We are extremely concerned that legislation proposed in Saint Paul ignores these recent advances and seeks to ban the retail sale of pets from licensed, inspected and regulated breeders or 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, while promoting pets from sources that lack this oversight. It further harms the public by removing available consumer protections for new pet owners and potentially increases public health risks impacting the entire community.

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 Minnesota consumer protection laws, will likely be forced to purchase a puppy outside the community, or to obtain one of unknown origin and no health guarantees from a shelter.* If efforts to continue restricting pet sales succeed, families in Saint Paul 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.

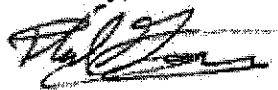
If Saint Paul wishes to enact a policy that truly promotes animal welfare while protecting consumers, we encourage prohibiting pet stores or dealers from purchasing animals from any breeder that has been found to have committed a direct violation of USDA animal welfare regulations or three or more indirect violations of USDA regulations related to the health or welfare of an animal in the last two years. This policy not only protects animal welfare but also preserves consumer choice and businesses in your community.

In the interests of our shared commitment to the wellbeing of all dogs, the American Kennel Club urges you to oppose any proposed ban on retail pet sales.

We welcome any 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 Saint Paul. Please do not hesitate to contact me or another member of the AKC Government Relations team at 919-816-3720 or doglaw@akc.org if you have any questions or we may be of assistance.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Phil M. Guidry, JD
Director, Policy Analysis
AKC Government Relations