



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

April 30, 2018

Re: Reasonable Pet Store Regulation Protects Consumer Choice, Benefits Dogs and Shelters

Dear Members of the House Agriculture Committee:

The American Kennel Club (AKC) is the world's largest purebred dog registry, the nation's largest purebred rescue network, and the only not-for-profit purebred dog registry devoted for more than 130 years to the health and wellbeing of dogs. We work actively to educate the public about responsible dog ownership and advocate for humane treatment of *all* dogs.

We understand a bill will be considered by your committee to ensure that pet stores in Michigan operate in a regulated, responsible manner. Allowing pet stores to remain open and regulated protects freedom of choice for pet purchasers, ensures the rights of legitimate, regulated businesses in the state; and will have a positive impact on the health and well-being of dogs sold in Michigan.

An important part of ensuring the success of a pet with a new owner is to ensure that it is an appropriate fit with the owner's lifestyle. Treasured pets may be obtained from a variety of sources, including breeders, pet stores, rescues, and local shelters. It is important that Michigan residents do not lose an important source for choosing a quality pet. Finding the right dog to meet a person's needs and lifestyle is a key component of keeping animals out of shelters and thereby addressing shelter population concerns.

Attached we have included an article that outlines the dangers of a pet store ban that was recently implemented in California. Unfortunately, when pet store bans are implemented and pet retailers are limited to sourcing dogs only from shelters and rescues, consumers lose an important regulated source for getting a dog. Rather than getting a dog of a specific breed from a professional breeder subject to USDA or state animal welfare laws, they are getting a dog of unknown background, temperament and health history.

Consumers deserve the right to be empowered with the knowledge that purchasing a dog from a pet store in Michigan means the dog was not obtained from a substandard breeder, and that the store itself is licensed, regulated, and inspected. This also protects public health in the local community by ensuring that healthy, well-bred pets are available.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Jennifer Clark at 919-816-3720 or doglaw@akc.org if you have any questions or we may be of assistance as you work to promote responsible dog ownership, sales, and breeding in Michigan.

Sincerely,

Sheila Goffe
Vice President, Government Relations

Attachments



**American
Kennel Club®**

Canine Legislation Position Statement

PET CHOICE

The American Kennel Club® emphatically supports freedom of choice in selecting a pet. AKC® actively promotes efforts to ensure that people are educated, understand the demands of responsible ownership and have access to a pet that is right for them. AKC strongly opposes any measure that restricts choice by compelling people and/or retailers to obtain pets solely from shelter or rescue distributors.