



**PET INDUSTRY JOINT
ADVISORY COUNCIL**
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Representative Tom Barrett
Chairman, House Agriculture Committee
Room 327, House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48933

Re: Request to include comments in support of House Bills (HB) 5916 and 5917 in the public hearing record

Dear Chairman Barrett and Members of the House Agriculture Committee,

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments in support of HB 5916 and HB 5917.

As the country's largest pet trade association, representing the interests of all segments of the pet industry throughout the United States, PIJAC counts among its members national associations, organizations, corporations, and individuals involved in the commercial pet trade. More specifically, PIJAC represents the interests of pet stores, distributors, pet supply manufacturers, breeders, retailers, and pet owners throughout the state of Michigan and across the United States.

House Bills 5916 and 5917 are in the best interest of both pet stores and pet owners in Michigan. Statewide sourcing regulations paired with the prohibition of local governments enforcing ordinances governing pet stores offer a common-sense solution to animal welfare concerns and consumer protections for pet owners, while making it easier for pet stores to be uniformly compliant.

Regulation of pet stores at the state level eliminates a patchwork of local ordinances that can actually allow bad actors to thrive. PIJAC believes that all pets in Michigan deserve to be treated with the same standards of care no matter where they are in the state, and that EVERY responsible pet store in the state should follow the same set of rules. Localities should not be given the opportunity to pass their own conflicting laws, some of which could ban the sale of pets altogether or decrease oversight or enforcement.

Uniform state laws that limit pet stores to animals sourced from licensed, inspected sources allow for increased transparency and consumer protection. When the public can review breeders' records for themselves and create a relationship with a pet store or breeder, they can make informed decisions about whether or not to acquire a specific animal with greater confidence. Local laws could impact the availability of specific breeds, the opportunity to work with breeders, and shift consumers to less readily regulated and overseen sources. Further, state regulation protects pet choice *and* positively effects shelter populations.


Responsible pet ownership begins with finding the ideal companion animal for a given family situation – this is the single greatest factor in reducing incidences of relinquishment to shelters and rescues. Statewide regulation ensures that families can readily acquire pets with necessary characteristics – due to allergies, space considerations, or temperament. As such, this proposed legislation would protect pet choice *and* positively impact shelter populations, since those who have access to the best pets for their situations are less likely to surrender them.

Regulation at the state level allows Michigan to speak with a single, unified voice on this issue. This allows Michigan lawmakers, retailers *and* the general public to play a much more impactful role in this important national conversation about responsible breeding and sale of companion animals.

As a strong proponent for animal welfare, small business, and consumer protection in Michigan, PIJAC respectfully asks that the committee support HB 5916 and HB 5917.

We appreciate your consideration and would welcome the opportunity to work with your committee on advancing this legislation and other policy proposals related to the care of pets. By working together, we can ensure that Michiganders continue to have access to regulated sources of pets to love now and in the future.

Sincerely,



Savonne Caughey
Director of Government Affairs
Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC)