



## VERMONT ANTI-PET LEGISLATION SET FOR HEARING

**\*\* WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup> HEARING DATE \*\***

### The Issue.

The Vermont House Agriculture Committee has placed House Bill 340 on the agenda for an April 27 meeting of the committee. If adopted in its introduced form, this legislation could effectively bring an end to dog breeding in the state because compliance with draconian provisions of the bill is nearly impossible. **The measure includes requirements of care that parents are not even required to meet for their own children! Immediate action is necessary to alert members of the committee to the real effect this bill would have on pet owners.**

### The Impact.

While well-intentioned proponents of [House Bill 340](#) may believe the bill would improve conditions for dogs in sub-standard breeding facilities, extremists seeking to pass this measure know that it would actually put responsible breeders out of business. Imposing legal requirements on anyone with “more than ten female covered dogs,” the bill would create an outright **ban against having more than fifty unsterilized female dogs over the age of 6 months for the “purpose of breeding the dog and selling any offspring for use as a pet.”** Because there is no objective standard for determining which dogs are intended for breeding purposes, anyone having more than 50 covered dogs and selling **even a single puppy** would likely be subject to the ban. Note that such a ban does not benefit dogs, because it does not target bad breeders. But worse, **this provision actually hurts puppies by increasing the risk of adverse genetic conditions!**

Some of the other provisions of the bill include:

- A requirement for “prompt treatment by a veterinarian of **any** illness or injury” no matter how minor it may be.
- Prohibition against dogs being bred to produce more than two litters in any 18-month period.
- Exercise requirements that mandate “constant and unfettered access to an outdoor exercise area with twice the square footage of the indoor space for each and every dog.”
- Minimum floor space in primary enclosures of at least 12 square feet for each dog that is up to 25 inches long, at least 20 square feet for each dog that is between 25 and 35 inches long, and at least 30 square feet for each dog that is 35 inches or longer, with the length of the dog measured from the tip of the nose to the base of the tail.
- A mandated temperature range of between 45 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit at all times, in conflict with requirements under federal law.

### PIJAC Position.

PIJAC supports the responsible ownership of pets, and enforcement of humane standards of care that are established through objective, scientific criteria. We oppose arbitrary standards that do not promote humane care and serve only to drive quality breeders out of business; many of the standards in the so-called “Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act” have no sound basis and subject responsible breeders to punitive and expensive requirements.

## Recommended Action.

The [House Committee on Agriculture](#) is scheduled to hear HB 340 on Wednesday April 27, 2011 in Room 31 at 10:00 a.m. **It is critical that PRIOR to this hearing members of the committee hear from all those who support the right to breed and have pets – Make sure they understand that this bill would put responsible breeders out of business and increase the supply of puppies from unscrupulous breeders!**

Phone and email all [members of the committee](#) to voice your **OPPOSITION** to House Bill 340. When communicating with legislators, always be respectful and polite, but do not be shy about expressing your concerns. Specifically request that the legislator commit to a vote **AGAINST** this bill.

You should **ALSO** contact your individual Representatives whether or not they sit on the [Agriculture Committee](#). You may do this easily just by putting in your zip code through [PIJAC's Legislative Action Center](#).

In communicating with legislators, you may wish to make the following points about the bill (always using your own words):

- Breeders should always observe humane standards in caring for their dogs, but this bill imposes arbitrary standards that are merely punitive towards responsible, quality breeders.
- A number of the provisions of the “Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act” are inconsistent with the needs of dogs and contradict requirements of federal law under the Animal Welfare Act.
- The arbitrary restriction against having more than 50 dogs has **no correlation whatsoever with the welfare of dogs**. It is inherently impossible to determine the quality of care being provided based solely on the number of dogs a breeder has! In fact, limiting the amount of breeding stock someone may have will harm dogs, since it will substantially increase the risk of genetic disorders.
- To mandate that a veterinarian see every dog for any condition, no matter how minor, as is required under this bill, is completely irrational and would never be accepted in human medicine. Such a requirement would be akin to mandating that a parent take their child to a physician every time he or she gets a light scratch on the knee.
- Temperature restrictions established by the “Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act” are unnecessarily restrictive, inconsistent with health requirements of all dogs, and contradict requirements of the federal Animal Welfare Act. This one-size-fits-all provision ignores the needs of different breeds of dogs as well as the conditions and acclimations of individual animals.
- Space and exercise requirements set forth in the “Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act” are not supported by prevailing science and research, are inconsistent with federal law, and are not necessary for the health and welfare of dogs.
- While some of the provisions of this bill are common practice for responsible breeders, other provisions are unnecessary, but would be cost-prohibitive, thereby driving responsible breeders out of business.

For questions or additional information about HB 340, contact PIJAC's Michael Maddox via email at [Michael@pijac.org](mailto:Michael@pijac.org) or by phone at 202-452-1525, ext 106. You may also visit the [Breaking News](#) page of PIJAC's website for updates on this and other initiatives impacting pet owners and the pet trade.

### PIJAC Members! PIJAC Fans! Join US...

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) has been protecting and promoting responsible pet ownership for nearly forty years. Follow our successes, events, and action alerts through Facebook and/or Twitter at PIJAC4pets. If you are not already a Member, please join us today by visiting [www.pijac.org/membership](http://www.pijac.org/membership). For additional information on PIJAC and its many exciting campaigns, please visit: [www.pijac.org](http://www.pijac.org) and [www.dontmesswithmypet.org](http://www.dontmesswithmypet.org). Or, contact us at 1-800-553-PETS (1-800-553-7387); [members@pijac.org](mailto:members@pijac.org).

**On behalf of pets, responsible pet owners, and the pet industry, we thank you!**