

Wisconsin Citizens Against Puppy Mills
P.O. Box 155
Muskego, WI 53150-0155
“Foster~Rescue~Adopt!”

April 25, 2014

Public Safety Committee
Milwaukee City Hall
200 East Wells Street
Room 205
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Public Safety Committee Members:

We are a grass roots group in the greater Milwaukee area called Wisconsin Citizens Against Puppy Mills. Our mission is to educate the general public about the close connection between pet stores and large commercial breeding facilities (aka "puppy mills") as well as the risks involved to consumers that purchase animals that come from these facilities. We are writing in support of the proposed ordinance to prohibit pet stores from selling commercially bred dogs, cats and rabbits unless they come from shelters or rescue groups for the following reasons.

- Years of research have shown that the vast majority of puppies sold in pet stores come from large-scale commercial breeding establishments where puppies are produced in large numbers for commercial resale to pet stores and pet sales over the Internet. Profit is given priority over the well-being of the animals.
- In puppy mills, dogs are bred solely for quantity, not quality, so unmonitored genetic defects and personality disorders are passed on from generation to generation. These problems all cause heartbreak for the families that purchase them. Many times animals are euthanized much too early or surrendered to shelters because of health issues or behavioral problems that pet owners just cannot handle.
- Dogs born and raised in puppy mills often suffer from a variety of health conditions and the puppies often arrive at pet stores with several of the following problems: giardia, parvovirus, distemper, upper respiratory infections, kennel cough, pneumonia, mange, flea/tick infestations, intestinal parasites, physical deformities, heartworm and chronic diarrhea. Consumers have no recourse if they purchase sick puppies or kittens with undisclosed, severe health conditions resulting from inhumane and irresponsible breeding in puppy mills. The City of Milwaukee does not have a "pet lemon law" as many other cities do that would protect the unknowing consumers from purchasing an animal with one or more health conditions. This is all the more reason why it is so important that Milwaukee pass this ordinance to eliminate the possibility of the consumer purchasing a diseased animal.
- It is very well known that many pet stores often misrepresent the origin of the puppies they sell. Most will not give out breeder information such as the breeder's name, address or phone number until after the puppy is purchased. Even then, the store might not disclose

that information. If you ask a pet store where they get their puppies, they will usually claim that they come from "reputable" or "local family" breeders" which is almost never the case. For this reason, more and more cities are passing ordinances that require pet stores to disclose breeder information prior to purchasing an animal so the consumer is aware of the animal's origin. However, consumers in the city of Milwaukee don't have that option. Passing this ordinance will not only protect the consumer, it will also prevent the sales of ill-bred animals within the community. Such an ordinance would greatly benefit our local shelters by allowing them to adopt out even more animals who are in desperate need of loving homes.

- Our group has documentation that one of the Milwaukee pet stores has received puppies from one of the largest puppy mills in the country. This commercial breeding establishment is called "Clearwater Kennels" and it houses over 1,100 + dogs. This particular puppy mill was mentioned by The Humane Society of the United States in a report entitled "A Horrible Hundred" which lists 100 of the most concerning puppy mills in the United States. The USDA has documented dozens of Animal Welfare Act violations at this kennel over a period of years. To read the report in its entirety please go to:
http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/pets/puppy_mills/100-puppy-mills-report.pdf

- We feel that all of the points listed above are valid reasons why Milwaukee should enact a pet store ordinance banning the sale of commercially bred dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores. We are concerned that far too many consumers don't even realize they are unwittingly supporting the puppy mill industry when they buy a puppy from a pet store. This ordinance will also ensure that the public is protected from buying sick and genetically diseased animals that come from commercial breeding establishments.

We urge Milwaukee to follow in the footsteps of the many other cities that have already banned the sale of commercially bred dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores. Passing this ordinance will be a positive and appropriate step for Milwaukee. It will protect consumers from the heartache and cost of bringing a sick animal into their home, while increasing adoptions of Milwaukee's homeless animals.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Debra Gutierrez

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Wisconsin Citizens Against Puppy Mills