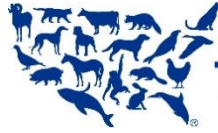


March 9, 2023

Senate Commerce and Consumer
Protection Committee



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

Minnesota Capitol Building, Room G-15
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: SF1317/HF1276 Letter of Support

Dear Chair Klein, Vice Chair Seeberger, Lead Dahms, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write in support of Senate File 1317/House File 1276, the humane pet store legislation that prohibits the in-store sale of dogs and cats while allowing stores to host adoption events with animal shelters and rescues.

This animal welfare and consumer protection measure will drive the pet market towards more humane sources like shelters, rescues, and responsible breeders and address known problems by stopping the sale of puppy mill puppies in pet stores.

A humane pet store bill reduces the demand for puppy mill puppies. It is documented that puppy mills (inhumane commercial breeding facilities that disregard the well-being of dogs for profit) supply Minnesota pet stores with puppies.

A humane pet store bill promotes pet adoption and does not impact responsible breeders. Pet stores that host adoption events save lives and bring homeless pets to a retail setting where consumers might not otherwise be exposed to them. For those who wish to buy a puppy, consumers will still be able to seek out a responsible breeder whom they can meet in person. Responsible breeders never sell to pet stores because they only sell directly to the public, so they wouldn't be negatively impacted by this bill.

A humane pet store bill will help prevent a public health risk. The Centers for Disease Control continues to link outbreaks of an antibiotic-resistant strain of *Campylobacter* to pet store puppies that have so far infected over 140 people across 22 states, including at least 6 reported cases in Minnesota, and sent dozens of people to the hospital. CDC officials claim that this outbreak is not over as it is hard to control a system that lacks hygiene at many points and seems to use antibiotics instead.

A humane pet store bill will protect consumers. Investigations have consistently revealed that pet stores charge premium prices for puppies with baseless guarantees that puppies are healthy, socialized, and come from humane, highly regulated breeders. In reality, most pet store puppies were born in puppy mills that raise dogs in deplorable conditions most people would find appalling. Consumers often spend thousands of dollars caring for sick pet store puppies, in some cases only to suffer the heartbreak of their new pet dying. Many pet store puppies also have behavioral issues and struggle to transition from life in a cage to life in a family. Additionally, pet stores routinely finance dog and cat purchases, with interest rates as high as 198% reported.

A humane pet store bill is business friendly. The vast majority of pet stores in Minnesota are already in compliance with this legislation because they already do not sell puppies. There is only a handful of pet stores in Minnesota that sell dogs and cats, whereas more than 130 do not sell dogs or cats. Puppy-

selling pet stores can thrive by converting from an outdated and socially unacceptable business model that relies on the sale of mill puppies to a humane model that focuses on selling quality products and services. The most successful pet stores in Minnesota and across the nation—both large chains and small shops—profit from selling products and offering in-demand services. The \$123 billion pet products and services industry is expected to continue to grow. Many stores also host adoption events with local shelters and rescues to give back to their communities and drive consumers to their stores.

A humane pet store bill will close a gap in current law. Federal regulation of commercial breeders is minimal, allowing for severe confinement for an animal’s entire life, and enforcement is severely lacking. United States Department of Agriculture-licensed breeders can legally confine dogs to wire-floored cages only 6 inches larger than themselves for their entire lives, breed females as early and as often as possible before they are discarded, and more. Minnesota does not regulate pet stores; neither the source of all puppies nor the conditions within stores is subject to state inspection.

Minnesota has the opportunity to join Washington, Maine, Maryland, California, Illinois, and New York and 450 localities across the nation- including St. Paul, Roseville, and Eden Prairie, Carver City, and Cloquet - that have already enacted humane pet store laws. We encourage your support for humane pet store legislation in our state.

Sincerely,

Zack Eichten
Minnesota State Director
*Humane Society of the
United States*



Kathryn Hansen
Board Chair
All Dog Rescue of MN



Julie Waltenburg
Executive Director
*Animal Allies Humane
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Ann Olson
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Mindi Callison
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Joan Barrett
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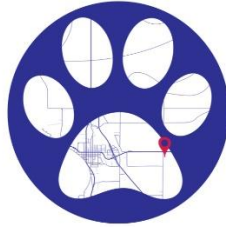


Kerry D'Amato
Executive Director
Pet Haven Inc of Minnesota



Pet Haven

Shauney Moen
President, Board of
Directors
*Pope County Humane
Society*



**POPE COUNTY
HUMANE SOCIETY**

Samantha Bistodeau
Director of Operations
Ruff Start Rescue



Rachel Mairose
Executive Director
Secondhand Hounds



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Chris Maddox
President
The Rescue Crew



TheRescueCrew
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Jean Breuning
Owner
Top Dog Country Club



Vicki Davis
Executive Director
Tri-County Humane Society

