

AB 702 (Santiago)

The Pet Breeder Humane Care Act

Bill Summary

AB 702 would improve the health and safety of cats and dogs by increasing health and safety standards in the pet breeder industry.

Existing Law

Establishes requirements for pet breeders including, but not limited to maintaining a written record on the health, status, and disposition of each dog being bred; maintaining sanitary living conditions and providing adequate nutrition for the animal(s); and forbidding a breeder from knowingly selling a dog that is diseased or ill. Violating this provision may result in a fine of up to \$10,000. (Health and Safety Code Section 122045)

Mandates microchipping of pets either adopted or redeemed at animal shelters to identify owners of lost pets (Food and Agricultural Code Sections 31108.3 and 31752.11).

Background

According to the American Humane Society, each year approximately 10 million pets are lost in the United States, and more than 6 million animals wind up in animal shelters. Out of the over 6 million animals that are sheltered, approximately 1.5 million sheltered dogs and cats lose their lives to euthanasia. This amounts to 171 dogs and cats every hour. In California, hundreds of thousands of sheltered dogs and cats are euthanized every year due to health conditions that result from irresponsible breeding.

A significant number of animals in shelters originate from the activities of dog and cat breeders who overbreed in unsafe conditions,

commonly referred to as “backyard breeders” – or puppy mills. Often times the conditions where the animals are kept are substandard and proper care is not provided for the animals, including lack of proper vaccinations and veterinary care.

These unsafe and unhealthy breeding practices cause immeasurable discomfort and suffering to animals by increasing the incidence of painful conditions including degenerative joint disease, severe allergic reactions, inflammatory intestinal diseases, epilepsy, cardiac disease and death. Associated with the increased morbidity and mortality, there is immense financial expense and heartbreak for unsuspecting families who unknowingly purchase these sick animals.

Need for AB 702

Current law does not provide adequate regulation and accountability for these so called “backyard breeders.” Lack of regulation and clear standards has led to unsafe overbreeding of cats and dogs. California must ensure that dogs and cats being bred are cared for properly. We must also prevent the unnecessary euthanizing of thousands of cats and dogs in California.

AB 702 would bring greater transparency to the industry while benefiting responsible breeders and improving outcomes for animals and families. Specifically, this bill would require “backyard breeders” to obtain a breeder permit with higher health and safety requirements for the care of bred cats and dogs, as well as place limits on the number of litters per animal per year. Improved health and safety standards for animals being bred include providing clean and

temperate water, and clean and properly maintained living quarters (i.e. removal of feces and urine).

By increasing health and safety standards of cats and dogs being bred, AB 702 will reduce the number of animals that find their way into our state's animal shelters and reduce the suffering of countless dogs and cats being irresponsibly bred.

Support

Social Compassion in Legislation (Sponsor)

Opposition

None on file.

For More Information

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