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Task Force to Study Canine Breeding Facilities and Sourcing Standards Meeting Minutes August 12, 2021

Task Force Members Present

- Senator Ben Kramer (co-chair)
- Delegate Kathleen Dumais (co-chair)
- Steve Connelly, Assistant Secretary, Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) Animal Industries and Consumer Services
- Michael Steadman, Assistant Attorney General, Maryland Department of Agriculture
- Dr. Katie Withowski, small animal veterinarian with significant experience working with canine breeders
- Susan Sarubin, expert in canine behavior
- Charley Hall, American Kennel Club
- Sara Yassin, Bailing Out Benji
- Lisa Radov, Maryland Votes for Animals
- Kerry Rod, American Humane
- Kathleen Summers, Humane Society of the United States
- Jeremy Krum, attorney with a practice concentration in animal welfare law
- Jeff Shepherd, Supervisory Animal Care Specialist, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Animal Care Program
- Owner of a small retail pet store - vacant
- Cassie Shirk, staff to the task force

I. Welcome

- A. Cassie Shirk, staff to the task force, went over housekeeping items, including a dedicated page for the task force on MDA's website - https://mda.maryland.gov/about_mda/Pages/taskforce-caninebreeding.aspx

II. Introduction

- A. Task force members introduced themselves and the organization they represent.

III. SB 103 of 2021/Chapter 448 - Domestic Animals - Retail Pet Stores and the Task Force to Study Canine Breeding Facilities and Sourcing Standards

- A. Delegate Dumais shared that her vision for this task force is to take a global look at this issue and to make sure that Maryland's law is as strong as it needs to be and yet at the same time as balanced as it should be. The delegate mentioned that she's looking at this as an education opportunity to take back to the legislature and to

see what else we should be doing. She does not condone puppy mills and wants to make sure we put them out of business, and that they are not used in Maryland.

- B. Senator Kramer discussed his interest in animal welfare issues and working to ensure animal welfare in our state. He acknowledged working with many of the members of this task force on this subject. The senator sponsored several pieces of legislation on this issue (mentioned below). He is hopeful that something productive will come from this task force and welcomes the opportunity to better ensure that breeders inside and outside of Maryland are licensed. Also, looking at how we can improve breeding standards inside and outside of Maryland. The senator expressed interest in hearing from the Humane Society and USDA.

- C. Legislative History - Maryland Pet Store and Animal Breeding Laws

- 1. Senator Kramer gave an overview on various pieces of legislation on this issue, including:

- a) [HB 667/Chapter 187 of 2014](#) - Crimes Relating to Animals - Unauthorized Surgical Devocalization of Cat or Dog - Penalties
 - b) [HB 1113/Chapter 573 of 2016](#) - Commercial Sale of Dogs and Cats - Prohibited Acts (Companion Animal Welfare Act)
 - c) [HB 494/Chapter 267 of 2016](#) - Agriculture - Animal Shelters - Uniform Standards of Operation and Care (Animal Shelters Standards Act of 2016)
 - d) [HB 334/Chapter 414 of 2017](#) - Local Government - Regulation of Animals - Kennel Licenses
 - e) [HB 781/Chapter 343 of 2017](#) - Retail Pet Stores - Animal Seller, Dog Cage Signs, and Records - Requirement Revisions
 - f) [HB 455/Chapter 188 of 2017](#) - Criminal Law - Animal Cruelty - Applicability
 - g) [HB 1662/Chapter 237 of 2018](#) - Business Regulation – Retail Pet Stores

- IV. Task Force Assignments

- A. Cassie mentioned potential topics for future meetings including:

- 1. an overview on state commercial pet breeders laws
 - 2. a discussion with USDA on its Animal Care Program

- B. Delegate Dumais would like a view of what other states are doing to see if there are other ways to look at animal welfare. Reaching out to NCSL and HSUS to present to the task force.

- V. Future Meetings

- A. We don't anticipate meeting much more than 3 more times. Cassie will send out a Doodle poll to task force members to schedule the next meeting. A final report is due to the legislature on December 1, 2021

- B. Kathleen Summers volunteered to give a short presentation of an overview on state laws that exist and types of standards that are required under federal enforcement acts.

- C. Dr. Katie Withowski mentioned that we should talk about importation regulations.

D. Steve Connelly stated that the MDA Spay & Neuter Program collects intake data from the shelters in the state and that the program manager, Nathan Boan, could do a presentation on this.

VI. Open Discussion

A. Kathleen Summers discussed the national dog shortage and that it might be misleading. She said many local shelters are starting to fill up again and we need to take into account that dog trends are cyclical.