

**BANNING THE SALE OF CATS, DOGS AND RABBITS
IN OTTAWA PET STORES AND OTHER RETAIL AVENUES**

SUBMISSION TO CITY OF OTTAWA

February 16, 2016



RECOMMENDATIONS RE BANNING THE SALE OF CATS, DOGS AND RABBITS IN OTTAWA PET STORES

About PAWS

Pupymill Awareness Working Solutions (PAWS) is a volunteer, non-profit organization in Ottawa, Ontario dedicated to raising public awareness and educating the public at large regarding the cruelty and abuse associated with puppy mills. This includes selling puppies via the internet, newspaper advertising, and in pet stores.

Through education and awareness, we empower individuals to make informed and ethical choices when choosing a companion animal.

PAWS fully supports and promotes the **adoption and/or fostering** of homeless animals via non-profit rescue organizations. We also support obtaining pets through local reputable and ethical breeders.

This briefing note was prepared for the City of Ottawa's February 2016 public consultation on a Report to Committee and Council with respect to "Banning the sale of cats, dogs and rabbits in Ottawa pet stores, retail outlets, flea markets, and/or any other retail or market venue".

Contact Information:

Eileen Woodside

PAWS Team

E-mail: Pawsolutions1@gmail.com

Website: www.pawsolutions.org

PURPOSE:

To request an amendment to the City of Ottawa's bylaws with respect to banning the sale of cats, dogs and rabbits in Ottawa pet stores, retail outlets, flea markets and any other retail or market venue.

These submissions are proposed in order to address the following:

- To shut down animal mills (large scale commercial breeding operations) and close off the retail distribution channel for animals that come from unethical and irresponsible breeders; (backyard breeders, etc.);
- To reduce the number of surrendered, abandoned, and unwanted animals in Ottawa;
- To reduce the high rate of euthanasia in shelters, which represents a sizable monetary contribution from the City of Ottawa to the Ottawa Humane Society;

- To reduce impulse purchases;
- To address concerns regarding the care and treatment of animals for sale in pet stores;
- To address the feral cat overpopulation;
- To help promote the humane treatment of cats, dogs and rabbits;
- To protect consumers from purchasing sick and/or ill-bred animals.

This submission is proposed to address the reasons why restricting the sale of cats, dogs and rabbits in pet stores and other retail avenues will result in helping eradicate the sourcing of animals from unethical substandard breeding facilities, increase awareness regarding responsible pet ownership, and better consumer protection.

RECOMMENDATION:

- To restrict the sale or distribution of cats, dogs and rabbits through pet stores, retail outlets, flea markets, and/or any other retail or market venue with an outright ban by the City of Ottawa.

This will be in keeping with the following five (5) municipalities in Ontario who have already taken this as a best practice and amended their respective bylaws with the implementation of an outright ban.

- Toronto
- Kingston
- Oakville
- Vaughan
- Waterloo

This is also in keeping with the following six (6) other Canadian cities who have introduced similar legislation:

Mississauga, ON; Richmond BC; Rosemont-La Petite Patrie, QC; New Westminister, BC; Hudson, QC; and Mount Royal, QC.

There are also over 100 jurisdictions throughout the United States.

The following statistics show positive and measurable results, as a direct result of introducing a similar ban, indicating as follows:

- a reduction in euthanasia;
- an increase in adoptions;
- a significant reduction in animal intake.

| Kingston Statistics: | 2014 | 2013 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Euthanasia Rates: | 30.8% | 33% |
| Stray intake | 66.8% | 67.6% |
| Adoptions Placed: | 51.2% | 46.3% |

(Source: Kingston Humane Society)

| Toronto Statistics: | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total Animal Intake in city shelter: | 10,548 | 12,542 | 15,624 |
| Total strays in city shelters: | 6,237 | 7,979 | 9,600 |
| No. of dogs in city shelters: | 2,758 | 3,042 | 3,211 |

(Source: Toronto Humane Society)

It is submitted as follows:

Reason 1:

- Animals sold in pet stores are not sourced from responsible, reputable or ethical breeders. These animals are sourced from unknown backgrounds. They often receive less than minimum care and oversight by a licensed veterinarian. There is no spay or neuter requirement included as part of the sale, which in turn perpetuates the overpopulation of unwanted animals. With potential health problems, and weak guarantees from the sellers, these animals often contribute to the high rate of abandonment, surrender, and euthanasia in our shelters.
- Reputable breeders guarantee the health and genetic integrity of their animals, with health screening for both parent dogs and puppies. Pet stores offer no such guarantee or customer protection.
- The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care believes that offering animals for adoption, as opposed to the retail sale of cats and dogs, promotes community protection from zoonotic diseases such as rabies.
- There are currently 54 pet stores listed in Ottawa - Complete list attached: (Source: <http://www.yellowpages.ca/search/si/1/Pet+Shops/Ottawa+ON>)
- Of those 54 pet stores, all but three (3) have embraced a moral and ethical approach in their commerce plan, many actively collaborating with shelter and rescue groups, raising awareness to help overcome the staggering number of homeless animals. They do this by regularly hosting adoption days.

- Not only do they succeed, but some have reported that their businesses flourish as they meet the demands of ongoing industry trends, and in doing so, enjoy the benefits of developing loyal and long-lasting customer relations.
- We strongly recommend that the last three (3) pet stores who continue to sell cats/dogs/rabbits embrace a more ethical and responsible business model, and undertake positive steps regarding collaborative efforts with local reputable registered rescue groups and shelters who work together to increase the number of adoptions of the countless homeless animals already in our system. We recommend that all pet stores obtain these animals from any of the following sources only:
 - Municipal animal shelters;
 - Registered humane societies;
 - Registered shelters or rescue groups.

Reason 2:

- In 2012-2013, the Ottawa Humane Society admitted the following animals for care:

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|----------|---------------|
| (Source: Ottawa Humane Society) | Dogs: | Cats: | Rabbits: | TOTAL: |
| | 2062 | 6791 | 524 | 9377 |

Reason 3:

- In 2012-2013, local volunteer animal rescue groups were randomly polled. The following statistics show the number of animals admitted for care: (represents 7 of approx. 40 Ottawa rescue groups)

| | Dogs: | Cats: | Rabbits: | TOTAL: |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Ottawa Dog Rescue (founded 09/13) | 24 | | | 24 |
| Loyal Dog Rescue | 384 | | | 384 |
| Sit With Me | 162 | 7 | | 169 |
| Catahoula Dog Rescue | 95 | | | 95 |
| Spot's Dog Rescue (approx.) | 100 | | | 100 |
| Ottawa Stray Cat | | 203 | | 203 |
| Blue Moon Rabbit Rescue | | | 115 | 115 |
| TOTAL: | 765 | 210 | 115 | 1090 |

Reason 4

- Humane Society International Canada and other animal protection groups estimate that 90% of puppies sold in pet stores come from puppy mills. Additionally, it is estimated that there are thousands of puppy mills operating in the province of Quebec.

Reason 5

- The Ottawa Kennel Club (OKC), who represents local breeders, in line with the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC) Member Breeders' Code of Practice expressly and unequivocally forbids breeders to sell to pet stores. Section III (g) states:
“No breeder shall sell or donate dogs for the purpose of their being auctioned, raffled or to pet stores”.

Reason 6

- Regulation of breeding facilities who sell via the internet falls outside the scope of municipal jurisdictions. However, regulation of animals for sale in pet stores can easily be implemented and managed at a municipal level to enforce positive and measurable benefits.

Reason 7

- No less than 2200 formal supporting letters have been submitted in support of banning the sale of cats, dogs and rabbits in Ottawa pet shops and other retail market places. In addition, over 10,000 individuals have signed a petition in support of an outright ban. (available upon request)

Some of the reasons documented in these submissions include:

- To reduce the supply and demand of animals sourced from puppy mills;
- To reduce the number of unwanted, abandoned and/or surrendered pets;
- To increase adoptions and decrease euthanasia in shelters;
- To reduce impulse purchases at the retail level;
- To promote the humane treatment of animals.

Reason 8

- The City of Ottawa will save time, resources, and money as bylaw services will no longer be required to spend time ensuring compliance at those stores.

Reason 9

- We strongly recommend against grandfathering the three existing pet stores currently selling cats, dogs and rabbits, which would entirely defeat the purpose of any bylaw change. Grandfathering these stores would not only protect the status quo, it would increase these stores ability to continue selling animals of unknown origin, as more surrounding municipalities enact their own restrictions on pet store sales.

Such a grandfathering clause would result in Ottawa becoming the dumping ground for animals of unknown origin, and create the opposite environment of what is intended with any changes.

Support for above recommendations:

- Canadian Federation of Humane Societies
- Humane Society International Canada
- Ottawa Humane Society
- Humane Society Durham Region

Research Based On:

- Regional Humane Society statistics;
- Humane Society International Canada statistics;
- Information from Canadian Federation of Humane Societies;
- Local Animal Rescue organizations;
- Information from Ontario SPCA;
- Information from other municipalities who have passed similar legislation.

Relevant News Links:

- [Paws R Us Puppy Mill Seizure Shawville Quebec 2011](#)
- [Federal Campaign to Shut Down Puppy Mills February 2016](#)
- [Canadian laws too weak](#)
- [Nova Scotia Puppy Mill Seizure February 2016](#)
- [BC Puppy Mill Seizure February 2016](#)

Additional Provisions:

Local Statistics:

- In 2012-13 the Ottawa Humane Society admitted 9,377 cats, dogs and rabbits for care.
- At the time of submission there were over 1000 cats, dogs and rabbits looking for a home within one hour of Ottawa city limits. (Source: Petfinder)

This does not include all of those currently in the shelter system, or under the care of the 40+ volunteer animal rescue groups desperately trying to rehome animals and save healthy animals from euthanasia due to lack of space and/or resources in shelters.

- Of the 50 pet stores currently operating without selling cats, dogs or rabbits, many are actively collaborating with shelter and/or animal rescue groups, offering their support in raising awareness to help overcome the staggering number of homeless animals. They regularly promote pet adoption days by hosting in-store events on a regular basis.

Municipalities:

- Municipalities are an integral part of shutting down puppy mills and protecting consumers. Each municipality can independently implement positive change;
- It is the municipality's responsibility to issue business licenses;
- It is also the municipality's (or its designate, such as a local Humane Society) responsibility to respond to animal cruelty or hoarding complaints.

Industry Leaders:

- Corporate industry leaders such as PetSmart, Pet Valu and Global Pet Foods, all embrace adoption first, collaborating with shelter and volunteer rescue groups, offering support in helping overcome the number of homeless pets.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Ottawa Humane Society: (OHS)

Position Statement Excerpt: <http://www.ottawahumane.ca/about-us/media/position-statements/#answer2>

“The OHS opposes the for profit sale of companion animals in retail pet stores and through the Internet. These sources may not provide sufficient information about species-specific requirements and often promote impulse buying. They also may provide unhealthy living conditions for the animals and contribute to the overpopulation of pets. The OHS supports the adoption of companion animals from humane societies, pet adoption locations, animal welfare organizations, animal shelters, and pounds. The OHS recommends that prospective adopters research the history of the animal to determine whether there will be a good fit between the animal’s needs and the adopter’s lifestyle.”

Canadian Federation of Humane Societies: (CFHS)

Position Statement Excerpt: (http://cfhs.ca/info/companion_animals#link_eight)

“The CFHS strongly advocates the adoption of animals from reputable shelters, rescue organizations or their satellite adoption centres. The CFHS also accepts the acquisition of animals from responsible breeders.”

“The CFHS condemns puppy mills and opposes the sale of cats and dogs in markets or pet stores other than satellite adoption centres. The CFHS also disapproves of large-scale commercial breeders and ‘backyard breeders.’

“Banning the sale of dogs/cats in a pet shop is a first step in the ongoing problem of too many unwanted pets.

Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals: (SPCA)

Excerpt demonstrating the need to address the overpopulation problem:

(<http://www.ontariospca.ca/5-faqs.shtml#B1>)

*“Sadly, in some cases, animals may be **euthanized due to shelter overcrowding**. Overcrowding threatens the lives of all animals in our care due to stress, weakened immune systems and increased risk of disease transmission. This requires us to make difficult decisions about euthanasia based on health, physical, emotional and psychological suffering, and the best interests of the hundreds of animals receiving lifesaving care in a facility.”*

City of Toronto:

In 2011, the City of Toronto unanimously passed a bylaw that bans the sale of animals in stores. Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker, who put forward the motion, stated that pet stores that sell animals are bad for pets and consumers. *“They’re kept in small cages, they’re not socialized, they have immense health problems,”* he said. *“Consumers are getting ripped off.”* The bylaw stipulates that stores cannot sell dogs or cats unless obtained from a municipal shelter, a humane society or registered rescue group. The bylaw also serves to reduce euthanasia by steering consumers to animals that have been health-checked and spayed/neutered. *“It really slams the door closed on people who mass-produce animals for profit,”* said Mr. De Baeremaeker.

Humane Society of Durham Region: (HSDR)

The Humane Society of Durham Region (HSDR) has recently stated that: *“we...support the ban of the sale of animals in pet stores, retail establishments, flea markets and online, unless they are from a municipal shelter, humane society or recognized community rescue organization.”* The HSDR added: *“By stopping the sale of pets in stores and through online agencies, it will both reduce the number of unaltered and potentially unhealthy animals entering the community and it will help the rescue organizations find homes for those animals already in shelters. It’s a win-win situation.”*

Kingston, Mississauga, Oakville, Vaughan, Waterloo:

The Cities of Kingston, Mississauga, Oakville, Vaughan and Waterloo have also placed similar restrictions on the sale of pets from pet stores, with more Ontario municipalities presently reviewing the same revisions to their bylaws.

PetSmart Charities of Canada:

PetSmart Charities™ and PetSmart Charities™ of Canada are nonprofit animal welfare organizations that save the lives of homeless pets. More than 400,000 dogs and cats find homes each year through our [adoption program](#) in all PetSmart® stores and our sponsored [adoption events](#).

PetSmart Charities grants more money to directly help pets in need than any other animal welfare group in North America, with a focus on [funding spay/neuter services](#) that help communities solve the problem of pet overpopulation.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Small sample of thousands of supporting letters and e-mails; (available upon request)
List of Ottawa Pet Stores. (Source: <http://www.yellowpages.ca/search/si/1/Pet+Shops/Ottawa+ON>)

Formal supporting letters from the following Animal Welfare Organizations:

- Ottawa Humane Society
- Canadian Federation of Humane Societies
- Humane Society International Canada
- Humane Society Durham Region

Formal supporting letters from the following Ottawa independent Pet Store Owners:

- Chew That
- Coco Mutts
- Cricket & Co.
- Global Pet Foods, Kanata & Hintonburg
- Healthy Pets HQ
- March Road Pet Store
- Master 'n Dogs
- Pet Valu, Orleans
- The Pet Shoppe

Formal supporting letters from the following Veterinarians:

- Dr. Anne Downes, DVM
- Dr. Kim Holtzman, DVM, Cedarview Animal Hospital
- Pretoria Pet Hospital
- Dr. Mark E. Liepmann, DVM
- Sarah Leduchowski, Registered Veterinary Technician

Formal supporting letters from the following Ottawa Animal Rescue Groups:

- Ottawa Dog Rescue
- Loyal Dog Rescue
- Ottawa and Valley Lost Pet Network
- Minpinerie Dog Rescue
- New Moon Rabbit Rescue

Formal supporting letter from the following reputable dog breeder:

- Dave Swift, co-owner, Knighterrant Mastiffs

Formal complaints from unsatisfied customers.