



February 2016

AKC OPPOSES NEW JERSEY SENATE BILL 63

The American Kennel Club believes that if enacted as currently written, Senate Bill 63 will upend New Jersey's current animal laws in favor of radical, untested policies that will ultimately harm consumers. Banning the sale of pets from known, regulated and inspected sources, and limiting pet shops to only sell pets from unknown, unregulated and uninspected sources, does the exact opposite of the bill's purported intent. Instead, SB 63 will remove available protection for new pet owners and dramatically increase the risks to the public health of New Jersey and surrounding states.

The American Kennel Club (AKC) opposes New Jersey Senate Bill 63 (2016-17), *as introduced*, for the following reasons:

- **The AKC supports reasonable laws and regulations intended to protect the pet-buying public in obtaining a sound dog of the breed represented, such as New Jersey's Pet Purchase Protection Act.** Extensive provisions of the Act were updated in 2015. These recent updates are only beginning to impact pet store operations and therefore further protect New Jersey's consumers under the Act. Senate Bill 63's proposed repeal of the Pet Purchase Protection Act, however, would not only eliminate available consumer protections for new pet owners, but it would also effectively negate the time and thoughtful consideration recently spent by the Legislature in passing and enacting operational changes of regulated entities.
- By requiring only in-person pet transactions of breeders and other sellers, Senate Bill 63 creates an unfair burden on hobby breeders who may depend on the ability to place dogs selectively in known situations without physically meeting with the purchaser in their home or kennel at the specific time of sale. Many hobbyists are comfortable purchasing an animal sight unseen based on years of studying bloodlines and pedigrees, the existence of previous relationships or purchases from the same breeder, or personal knowledge of a breeder's facilities and operating procedures. These scenarios are particularly common for breeders and fanciers of rare breeds. Likewise, it is also not reasonable for hobby breeders to expect that purchasers will be willing to travel long distances to purchase a particular puppy in person as would be required under SB 63's interstate commerce restrictions. **Paradoxically, while punishing small responsible hobby breeders, consumers, and licensed and regulated pet shops in New Jersey communities, SB 63 does nothing to prohibit the sale of puppies and kittens from the back of trucks in parking lots and highway rest stops. Such transactions do little to indicate the care offered to, and conditions experienced by, an animal that face-to-face transaction requirements purportedly would demonstrate.**
- Senate Bill 63 will dramatically reduce the ability of New Jersey residents to purchase a pet with the predictable type, mandated care, and substantiated health backgrounds that purebred pets provide. Under the provisions of SB 63, pet stores will be allowed to sell only those dogs

and cats sourced from shelters, rescues, and other similar organizations. Unfortunately, many communities lack enough local breeders to meet the demand for the specific pets desired by local residents. The National Animal Interest Alliance has extensively studied various aspects of the pet marketplace, including pet shelters, in an effort to reduce the number of adoptable pets that are euthanized in American animal shelters. Their Shelter Report, available at shelterproject.naiaonline.org/purebred, reports that less than five percent of dogs available in shelters throughout the nation are purebred dogs. If SB 63 is enacted, New Jersey families seeking a puppy that is a specific breed from a professional breeder subject to USDA or state animal welfare standards, or one that has traditionally been covered by New Jersey's consumer protection laws, will likely have little other alternative than to obtain a pet of unknown background, health history or status. **When consumers cannot acquire a pet that is an appropriate fit for their lifestyle, that animal is more likely to cycle in and out of the shelter system.** A better solution is to ensure that consumers are educated, understand the demands of responsible ownership, have access to a variety of pets so that they can make an educated selection for life-long success, and can avail themselves of consumer protections should they need to.

- Senate Bill 63's attempt at assailing the reputations of and the valuable work done by all types of dog breeders with out-of-date USDA information, questionable statistics, and broadly-discredited conjecture, included in the bill as over two pages of "findings", will likely serve as the unsubstantiated justification for additional radical legislation that will earn New Jersey the title of most unfriendly state to dog owners. **The AKC believes New Jersey can do better than using biased, discredited and purposely misleading anti-breeder language in state statute—and strongly urges its removal.**

Founded in 1884, the American Kennel Club (AKC) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit purebred dog registry dedicated to promoting responsible dog ownership, advocating for dogs as family companions, advancing canine health and well-being, and working to protect the rights of all responsible dog owners. The AKC represents more than 5,100 dog clubs nationally, including 118 clubs in New Jersey. In 2014, AKC licensed and sanctioned 479 events in New Jersey, in which more than 87,100 dogs participated.