



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUBSM

Stacey Ober, J.D.
Government Relations
Regional Manager
New England

March 27, 2024

The Honorable David Durfee, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry
115 State Street, Room 49
Montpelier, Vermont 05609-0101

RE: AKC Opposes H. 567, Sale of Dogs, Cats, and Wolf-Hybrids by Pet Shops

Dear Chair Durfee and Members of the House Committee:

Founded in 1884, the American Kennel Club (AKC) is a not-for-profit that is recognized as a trusted expert in canine health, breeding, and training. We advocate for the purebred dog as a family companion and promote the ideals of responsible dog ownership. We represent over 5,000 dog clubs nationally, including nine in Vermont, which represent thousands of constituent dog owners. In 2022, [AKC licensed and sanctioned 68 events](#) in Vermont where more than 6,000 dogs participated. Surveys estimate that exhibitors spend \$982 per show weekend, many of whom travel into Vermont to participate.

AKC strongly opposes any measure that restricts choice by compelling people and/or retailers to obtain pets solely from shelter or rescue distributors, including H. 567. Vermont already allows licensed pet shops to partner with animal shelters to promote animals available for re-homing. However, the state should not be forcing pet shops into a restricted business model.

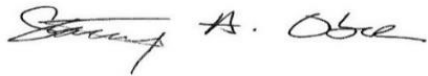
Moreover, in the United States, the number of puppies produced by responsible breeders does not satisfy the public's demand for those puppies. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) [Pet Ownership and Demographic Sourcebook](#) reported on page 21 that less than 25% surveyed in 2022 got a new dog from a breeder. AKC breeders also report their wait lists for families looking for a purebred puppy are typically two to three years. Pet shops provide a valued alternative for many pet purchasers who wish to purchase a dog with predictable traits, substantiated health backgrounds, and life-long ownership support.

If consumers are unwilling to wait for a puppy from a breeder and cannot obtain the pet they want from licensed and inspected pet shops that are required to give pet purchase protections, they are at significant risk of online scams. Since 2017, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) has been [studying the fraud](#) perpetrated on an unsuspecting public, and has warned consumers to exercise caution when purchasing pets without seeing them in person. According to the BBB, pet scams accounted for an estimated 25% of all online scams in 2021. In addition, shelter and rescue animals can present behavioral challenges that would not be a good fit for new owners, which often leads to animals being relinquished to shelters.

Currently, Vermont has no registration or licensure requirement to oversee animal import organizations and certify the health of animals being brought importing into the state. These animals may not always be the best option for every family that wants a pet. People deserve the freedom to decide for themselves whether to acquire a pet from a regulated source, like pet stores, which are subject to healthy sourcing requirements, care and conditions standards, and provide consumer protections; or not.

Respectfully, AKC requests that the committee reject H. 567 for these above reasons. If I can be of further assistance, kindly contact me. I can be reached at (919) 816-3348 or Stacey.Ober@akc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacey A. Ober". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Government Relations Regional Manager, New England

Cc: Mary McFaun, President, Vermont Federation of Dog Clubs