

House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Chairman and Members of the House Commerce Committee,

As a Vermont-based small business that has been supporting our communities for 43 years, I appreciate the House Commerce Committee's efforts to strengthen consumer privacy protections through S.71. Our store shares that goal as our customers' trust is central to our success. However, we are concerned that the amendments under consideration would unintentionally harm local businesses like ours.

The Senate's unanimously passed version of S.71 struck a strong and sensible balance. It aligned Vermont's privacy framework with surrounding states, ensuring Vermonters receive meaningful protections without putting our local businesses at a disadvantage. The House Commerce Committee's amendment, however, introduces data minimization regulations that will make it harder for my business to personalize my outreach and interactions with Vermonters.

As we've seen from other state laws, small businesses have spent thousands of unbudgeted resources on website updates and reconfiguration of basic marketing tools. We depend on our email lists, loyalty programs, and digital ads to help us reach our neighbors. At a time when Vermonters spend roughly \$50 million each month with Amazon, every dollar we lose in affordable advertising provides large out-of-state companies more space to gain customers attention. They have the resources to pay more for advertising while we operate on fine margins. This type of legislation limits our ability to compete, hire Vermonters, and reinvest in our communities.

Vermonters want to support local businesses, and we want to meet them where they are - online and in-store. But if these advertising and communication costs rise, we'll reach fewer customers and lose the ability to offer the personalized experiences our shoppers appreciate.

I urge the Committee to consider restoring the balance achieved in the Senate version of S.71. Protecting privacy and supporting the local economy do not have to be competing goals. By adopting a version of the bill consistent with other New England states, Vermont can achieve both.

Sincerely,

Kevin Eddy
Owner
Pet Food Warehouse Ltd.
South Burlington, VT