



SAN FRANCISCO CONSIDERS BAN ON SALE OF PETS

**** JULY 8, 2010 HEARING ****

The Issue.

The San Francisco Commission of Animal Control and Welfare expects to vote at its next meeting on a recommendation to enact an ordinance that would prohibit the sale of pets by pet stores. The proposal originally targeted dogs and cats, but as voted on by the Commission appears likely to include other species as well and potentially ban all pets. **PIJAC is urging those who support the right to have pets to contact members of the Commission, as well as the Board of Supervisors, in opposition to this blatant anti-pet proposal.**

The Impact.

At a June meeting, the Commission entertained public input and engaged in continued discussion of a proposal by Commission member Philip Gerrie to ban the pet store sale of animals. The Commission stated that the proposed ordinance “is intended to stop the sale of dogs and cats from puppy mills, as well as decrease euthanasia rates of other small animals in city shelters.”

After significant discussion of the proposal at its last meeting, the Commission declined to act on the proposal but indicated it would be placed on the agenda again for its July 8, 2010 meeting. Based on the most recent discussion, it appears likely that the final proposal will include a ban not only on dogs and cats, but on various other species as well. Such species may include hamsters, rats, mice, guinea pigs, chinchillas, other small animals, reptiles, and birds, among others. Potentially, this ordinance could ban the sale of all pets in San Francisco.

The Commission is an advisory body, and does not have any authority to adopt law. However, its recommendations to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors carry significant weight. The actions of the Commission appear to be intended to eliminate pet stores in San Francisco, funneling pet owners to shelters in order to “to increase adoptions of rescue and shelter animals.” However, the potential impact of this proposal goes far beyond the borders of San Francisco as extremists will seek to use such a precedent as a basis to adopt similar restrictions in other jurisdictions.

PIJAC Position.

PIJAC strongly supports the right to keep pets, and the right of pet owners to have options as to where they obtain their companion animals based on the pet owner’s individual circumstances, needs and preferences. Pet stores provide healthy, responsibly raised pets to the public, and should serve as one of the options pet owners may turn to in choosing a companion animal. Discriminatory bans against the sale of animals by pet stores are poor public policy, and are harmful to pets and pet owners. Such bans do not benefit animals or the pet owning public.

Recommended Action.

The Commission has not published an actual proposed ordinance yet, so it is impossible to know at this time what they would actually be recommending to the Board of Supervisors. The nature of the proposal, though, is likely to be more clearly defined at the July 8th meeting of the Commission. **You are strongly encouraged to attend this meeting, if possible, to voice objections to this proposal. Prior to the meeting, all persons should contact members of the Commission, as well as members of the Board of Supervisors (see contact information below).** Make certain they are aware of the strong opposition to this proposal. You may wish to make the following points, in your own words:

- The sponsor claims this proposal is “consistent with the City’s goal of caring about animal welfare” but limiting the ability of people to get pets is actually inconsistent with that goal. Pet stores provide people who love pets a responsible source of healthy, loving companion animals.
- Contrary to the claims of some advocates, research demonstrates that pet store puppies are as healthy, or healthier, than puppies from any other source.
- Banning the sale of pet store animals will not ensure pet owners adopt shelter animals. Those who choose pet store animals do so for many reasons, including the reality that the pet of their choice may not even be available for adoption.
- Dogs ending up in shelters rarely came from pet stores. Major studies consistently show that pet store dogs represent a very small percentage of the animals relinquished to shelters.
- Most pet stores obtain their puppies from responsible breeders, and customers choosing pet store puppies overwhelmingly end up with healthy and well-socialized pets.
- A ban targeting pet stores to protect animals is not rational. Pet stores are already more heavily regulated than any other source of pet animals in the state (and no state regulates pet stores more stringently than does California).
- Regulations on business should be based on a rational relationship between the restrictions and a goal serving the public interest. This proposal does not meet that standard.

PIJAC will be posting revised *PetAlerts* on the Breaking News page of its website (<http://www.pijac.org/petinformation/breakingnews.asp>) to advise members of any change in status and to recommend appropriate action. You are encouraged to check the PIJAC website regularly for additional information. Those having questions about this proposal should contact PIJAC’s Michael Maddox via email at michael@pijac.org or by phone at 202-452-1525, ext. 106.

City of San Francisco
Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
City Hall, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689
415/554-5184
www.sfgov.org/bdsupvrs

BOARD MEMBER

David Chiu (President)(District 3)
Michela Alioto-Pier (District 2)
John Avalos (District 11)
David Campos (District 9)
Carmen Chu (District 4)
Chris Daly (District 6)
Bevan Dufty (District 8)
Sean Elsbernd (District 7)
Eric Mar (District 1)
Sophie Maxwell (District 10)
Ross Mirkarimi (District 5)

TEL. #

415/554-7450
415/554-7752
415/554-6975
415/554-5144
415/554-7460
415/554-7970
415/554-6968
415/554-6516
415/554-7410
415/554-7670
415/554-7630

FAX #

415/554-7454
415/554-7843
415/554-6979
415/554-6255
415/554-7432
415/554-7974
415/554-6909
415/554-6546
415/554-7415
415/554-7674
415/554-7634

EMAIL

david.chiu@sfgov.org
michela.alioto-pier@sfgov.org
john.avalos@sfgov.org
david.campos@sfgov.org
carmen.chu@sfgov.org
chris.daly@sfgov.org
bevan.dufty@sfgov.org
sean.elsbernd@sfgov.org
eric.l.mar@sfgov.org
sophie.maxwell@sfgov.org
ross.mirkarimi@sfgov.org

City of San Francisco
Commission of Animal Control & Welfare
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
City Hall, Room 362
San Francisco, CA 94102
415/554-6074
www.sfgov.org/awcc

COMMISSIONER

Sally Stephens (Chair)
Andrea Brooks (Vice-Chair)
Philip Gerrie (Secretary)
David Gordon
Pam Hemphill
Laurie Kennedy-Routhier
Angela L. Padilla

TEL#

415/554-6074
415/554-6074
415/554-6074
415/554-6074
415/554-6074
415/554-6074
415/554-6074