



Written Testimony on House Bill 506
Senate Agriculture Committee

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Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Hoagland, Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the Senate Agriculture Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written interested party testimony on House Bill 506, legislation to amend Ohio's high-volume dog breeder law.

I am the President & CEO of the Cleveland Animal Protective League (APL), which is the humane society for Cuyahoga County and one of the largest animal shelters in Ohio. We are a private, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization organized under Ohio Revised Code 1717, and as such, are also authorized to appoint humane agents who enforce Ohio's animal protection laws.

In a perfect world, the Cleveland APL would prefer that high-volume, commercial dog breeding not be permitted in our state. Dogs are social, companion animals. We do not believe they should live their lives in cages in a facility producing puppies for no reason other than financial profit. However, we understand these businesses lawfully exist, and that it is the will of the legislature to enact protections governing this practice that at least will improve the care and husbandry of these dogs.

We appreciate modifications that have been made to the bill thus far, such as including an increase for cage sizes, requiring solid flooring for length of the dog laying down, and including humane societies formed under Chapter 1717 in the exempted kennels. We feel these provisions and others in the bill are an improvement from current law.

An ongoing concern, however, is the definition of "high-volume breeder". If this definition is not as tight as possible, the bill will miss the mark and continue to allow too many breeders to evade the care standards that have been carefully crafted with input from a diverse group of interested parties.

We support language that defines high-volume breeders as an establishment that keeps, houses and maintains five or more breeding dogs that 1) sells one or more adult dogs or puppies to a dog retailer or pet store, 2) sells 15 puppies in any given calendar year to the public, and/or 3) keeps, houses, or maintains more than 30 puppies that are under four months of age.

Ohio's previous attempts to regulate this practice have fallen short. If our state is going to continue to permit high-volume dog breeding, strong revisions must be made to ensure the safety and welfare of this vulnerable population of dogs, and while not perfect, we believe this bill is a good starting point.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this legislation. I appreciate thoughtful consideration of this important issue.