



NAIA Trust Action Alert!

NAIA Trust opposes SB55, the Virginia breeder/seller licensing bill

New definitions attempt to obscure intention to license all breeders

Once again, pet breeders in Virginia face an onerous attempt to license everyone who sells a “companion animal” i.e. a dog, cat, guinea pig, hamster, rabbit, or non-human primate.

Introduced by Senator William Roscoe Reynolds, SB 55 requires

- a dealer business license for anyone who breeds and sells companion animals;
- sterilization of any dog or cat acquired from a shelter or rescue or purchased from a dealer unless the sale is to a hobby breeder who plans to breed it once prior to spay or neuter; and
- implantation of microchips in all dogs and cats sold after January 1, 2007.

SB 55 seems to be an attempt to lull breeders into complacency with its definitions of different types of breeders, but make no mistake – this is an anti-breeder bill that has the potential to destroy responsible breeding in the state. Although it defines three types of breeders, the bill allows only “hobby breeders” who intend to breed only once to purchase intact animals. Those who breed for show or performance do not have an exemption from the spay-neuter requirement and are considered to be dealers if they sell animals for compensation or profit.

Under SB 55:

A “hobby breeder” is one who plans to breed one litter then spay or neuter the dog or cat. A hobby breeder is not allowed to make a profit on selling puppies or kittens.

A “breed improver” is an individual who owns dogs or cats and breeds working dogs or show dogs or cats of specific breeds, and breeds to perpetuate the breed, eliminate shortcomings or disease, or can otherwise demonstrate a conscious and deliberate plan of breed improvement. A breed improver is not allowed to make a profit and is not exempt from mandatory sterilization of newly acquired dogs or cats.

A “fancier breeder” is one who owns dogs or cats and regularly shows at AKC or UKC competitions. A fancier breeder is not allowed to make a profit on sales and is not exempt from the provision requiring spay or neuter of newly-acquired animals. (Cat breeders are probably surprised to learn that they need to compete at American Kennel Club or United Kennel Club competitions in order to qualify as a fancier breeder.)

None of the definitions specify whether these breeders who are not allowed to make a profit need a license, and the mandatory sterilization section of the bill exempts only hobby breeders and only for a single litter. The annual dealer licensing fee is \$150, and any buyer who fails to obtain the dealer license number of the individual or store where he purchased his pet is subject to a fine of \$150.

NAIA Trust for the Protection of Animals, Animal Owners and Animal Enterprises
Educating the Public about the Critical Difference between Animal Welfare and Animal Rights

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What you can do

Breeder licensing is obviously a mistake of monumental proportions. Like breed-specific laws, breeder licensing laws are difficult and costly to enforce, punish those who responsibly own and breed animals and do nothing to solve perceived pet population or nuisance problems. Worst, they drive conscientious breeders away and have the potential to decimate dog and cat clubs and organizations that are the backbone of public education about responsible dog care, provide public training classes, and improve the economy of the cities and towns where shows are held.

Since no hearings have been held, the best course of action may be to ask the sponsor to withdraw the bill. Tell him that SB55 does nothing to prevent shelter deaths; will drive good breeders out of breeding or out of state; criminalize an activity that is time-honored, valuable, and reasonable; place roadblocks in front of those who care most about the puppies and kittens they produce; and open the door for a black market in puppy and kitten sales. Please write your letters now if you are a Virginia resident or attend cat shows or dog shows or performance events in that state. You can reach Senator Reynolds at:

Sen. Wm. Roscoe Reynolds

Capitol Office email: district20@sov.state.va.us

Phone: (804) 698-7520; Fax: (804) 698-7651 (include a cover sheet for Sen. Reynolds)

SB55 has been referred to the Virginia Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Natural Resources. Committee chairman is Senator Charles R. Hawkins, General Assembly Building, Room 321; Capitol Square; Richmond, VA 23219; telephone (804)698-7519; e-mail district19@sov.state.va.us.

NAIA Trust opposes breeder licensing as costly to enforce and unfair to conscientious breeders and buyers. Such laws fail to solve community dilemmas caused by violations of animal control laws, give citizens a false impression that good breeders are responsible for shelter deaths, cause responsible breeders and owners to fear and disdain government, and can lead to or exacerbate neighborhood squabbles. For your information, the NAIA Trust letter in opposition to SB55 will be linked from this page in a few days.

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