

Colorado Springs Humane Pet Store Ordinance Nov. 9, 2021 Regular Meeting

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The Humane Pet Store Ordinance

would prohibit the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores unless sourced from *legitimate* shelters or rescues.

Narrow definition of “animal rescue organization” & July 2022 effective date

Colorado Springs would join **400 localities across 31 states**, including 10 in Colorado, and 5 states.



Benefits to Colorado Springs

- ✓ Stop hundreds of weeks old puppies from being trucked into Colorado Springs each year from cruel puppy mills across the country;
- ✓ Protect local consumers from being misled into supporting puppy mill cruelty, ending up with sick puppies, and facing financial hardship when puppy financing interest rates are much higher than disclosed;
- ✓ Protect the community from the ongoing antibiotic-resistant infection outbreak connected to pet store puppies;
- ✓ Support humane pet stores that already don't sell puppies and encourage the two that do to instead focus on products/services;
- ✓ Move the local pet market towards shelters, rescues and responsible breeders who only sell directly to the public; and
- ✓ Represent the values of your constituents (red shirts).

The Puppy Mill to Pet City Pipeline

Import records from the Colorado Dept. of Agriculture show the two local pet stores imported over 600 puppies from Jan. – Sept. of this year from out-of-state breeders and brokers.

Pet City relies heavily on puppy mill brokers—middlemen dealers who buy puppies from many different commercial breeders and resell them to pet stores.

Utilizing brokers adds an additional leg of transport for young, stressed, and often neglected puppies.

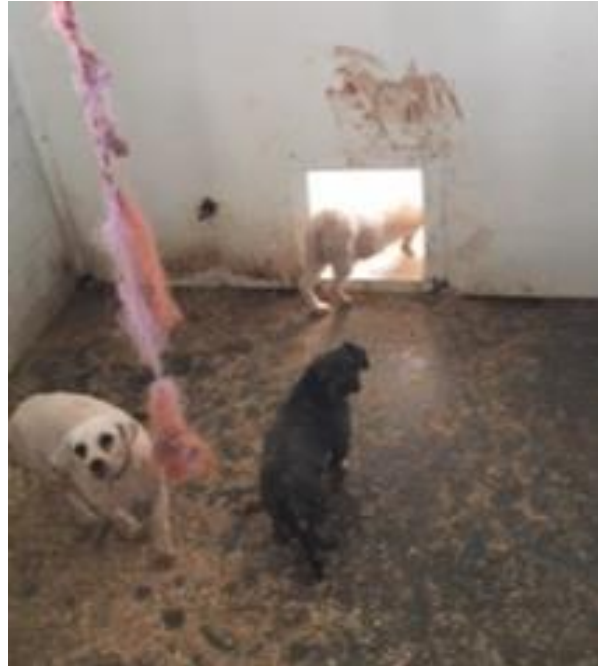
Reports of feces/urine-filled cages, sick and dead puppies, dehydrated puppies, failed air conditioning and heat.



Blue Ribbon Puppies (Odon, IN)

- Colorado import documents: Pet City stores sourced *hundreds* of puppies from this puppy mill broker already this year
- Why rely on this middleman dealer if there is a direct relationship with their breeders?
- BR sources from breeders with egregious animal welfare records, but Colorado import documents only list Blue Ribbon (the middleman) as the source
- Weeks old puppies are transported from hundreds of breeders across Midwest to BR to pet stores
 - Millersburg, OH (some of BR's many breeders are here) to Odon, IN: 348 miles/6 hours 13 minutes nonstop
 - Odon, IN to Colorado Springs: 1,053 miles/15 hours 35 minutes nonstop
- BR was identified as a source of the ongoing antibiotic-resistant *Campylobacter* outbreak
 - American Medical Association (Sept 2021): pet store puppies pose increasing public health threat; failure of traditional antibiotics led to complications & prolonged hospital stays (25% of 126 patients studied were hospitalized)
 - AMA: The “extensively drug-resistant strains were **only found in the commercial dog industry** and have not been associated with exposure to dogs from animal shelters...”
 - Dr. Robert Tauxe (CDC official): “The puppy story is not over – **it is difficult to control with a whole system that lacks hygiene at many points and seems to use antibiotics instead.**”

USDA/state inspection photos of Blue Ribbon Puppies' breeders



Clockwise from top left: Facility of licensee Andy E Yoder; Vernon Bontrager, Jonathan Detweiler, Chris Kauffman, Andy E Yoder, Myron J. Yoder

Where the mother dogs live

- Lewis Bloom (Clay Center, KS)
- Public records: Pet City bought puppies from this breeder as recently as 2020
- July 2020 photo shows dogs confined to small, raised enclosures with wire walls and seemingly bare wood supports.
- April 2021 USDA inspection: no citations
- Feb. 2020 USDA inspection: no citations; one “teachable moment”
- Other breeders with hundreds of dogs, only teachable moments (Hickory Valley Pets- 215 dogs)



Another Pet City breeder

Lorilee Thomas (Whiting, KS)

- Hasn't been inspected by USDA since October 2019
- 1,038 dogs on property in 2019
- March 2019 state inspection: kennels too small for larger breed dogs; one dog had mats on chest and stomach; another dog had matted eye discharge in fur
- October 2016 USDA inspection: puppies' feet were passing through mesh flooring
- September 2015 USDA inspection: sagging, unstable flooring, rusted metal, and broken and corroded wire protruding into enclosures that could harm animals; multiple enclosures with "brown greasy buildup" and dirty food receptacles



Another Pet City breeder

John Bontrager Jr (Dalton, WI)

- July 2020: 103 dogs on property
- October 2018: received official warning from state of Wisconsin due to several deficiencies at his kennel including:
 - A Maltese with periodontal disease in immediate need of dental care
 - Dogs with matted fur
 - Excessive feces on the floor in nine enclosures
 - Solid resting area in two kennels that were “soiled in excrement”



Responsible Breeders

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/how-find-responsible-dog-breeder>

- ✓ Only sell puppies to people they have met in person – never through pet stores or to people they haven't met.
- ✓ Encourage you to visit and see where the puppy was born and raised.
- ✓ Will not keep dogs in crowded spaces or cages. Their dogs will be in clean, roomy, comfortable areas.
- ✓ Breed sparingly, specializing in only one or a few breeds.
- ✓ Members of local and national breed clubs, many of which include in their codes of ethics that breeders should never sell to pet stores
- ✓ Will want you to sign a contract and ask you to return the puppy to them if you are ever unable to keep the dog.



Where residents will obtain their next pet

- Responsible breeders, who treat their dogs like pets and go to great lengths to only sell healthy, well-socialized puppies
- Search of AKC Marketplace and other reputable online sites show a wide variety of young puppies available directly from breeders in the area
- Local shelters and rescues, including breed-specific rescues for those looking for a specific dog or cat



Canine Care Certified is not a solution

- Voluntary breeder certification program with 3rd party inspections only once every 16 months; no information of what happens when a breeder fails inspection
- Only addresses one part of the pipeline; no standards for transport and no restrictions on who breeders can sell to (brokers, pet stores, etc.)
- Dr. Croney, head of the program, recently testified that the standards are not high enough, but are what can reasonably be expected of breeders
- No CCC breeders in Colorado or bordering states; only 84 total breeders, some might not sell to pet stores
- No transparency for consumers or local enforcement on breeder standards, which breeders are certified, whether or not breeders pass inspections, etc.

Lack of Transparency

- Pet Store Consumer Protection Act (state transparency law) went into effect in September
- Pet City’s “Puppies for Sale” webpage (Sept. 2021): “Due to new state law we chose not to show specific puppies and kittens for sale. The following images do not necessarily represent actual puppies and kittens for sale”; yet each puppy indicates a store location
- In store disclosures: lists breeder license numbers and prices on tiny cage cards, with no indication of what they are; no “\$” before price
- Actively hiding breeder and price information from consumers in a way that might be illegal when Dept. of Ag promulgates rules
- Other pet stores in the state are adhering to the new law and providing transparency on their websites and in-store
- Other notes on HB 1102:
 - Pet City lobbyists removed the most significant part of bill; leaving Colorado Springs and others open to new bad actors
 - Specially allows for stronger local action, as bi-partisan sponsors acknowledge the bill doesn’t go nearly far enough



The Thriving Pet Store Industry

American Pet Products Association:

- Americans spent \$103 billion on their pets in 2020 with pet food, products, and services dominating.
- Dog and cat sales weren't tracked for the second year because they are a "relatively small contributor to overall sales" and are "typically obtained outside of the retail pet channel."
- Despite the challenges of the pandemic, "pet specialty and independent retailers experienced solid growth in 2020."
- Stores added services like boarding, grooming, insurance, training, pet sitting and walking services to have an edge over online retailers.

Pet Business Magazine: Of the top 25 pet retailers in North America only one sells puppies, and that chain has moved down the list. More than half of the top retailers expanded in 2020.

Ex-Parthenon: One of the largest consulting organizations in the world reported the pet products and services industry has become "a potentially explosive market" as Americans are increasingly spending more on fancy food, treats, clothing, and premium services, and 78% of people prefer to shop for their pets in brick-and-mortar stores.

World Pet Association: In 2019, pet stores that only sold dry goods reported more total revenue per square foot (\$403) than those that sold animals (\$246).

Local Success Stories

- **Republic of Paws:** Popular, local, family-owned stores; founded in 2010 to give the community a “fun local hangout where pets and pet owners could meet other pets and pet owners; find healthy, natural foods and nutritional information”; expanded to 3 locations, likely due to in-demand grooming services
- **Pet Supplies Plus:** This chain, with a store in Colorado Springs, offers a wide variety of pet food and products as well as self-serve dog wash stations. The local location also offers delivery, curbside pickup and a visiting pet care clinic offering low-cost veterinary services.
- **Furry Friends, Inc.:** Local, independent store focusing on pet food, apparel, grooming, dog wash and clinical pet nutrition. Holds events with free teeth cleaning and vet care clinics.
- **Pet Pantry:** The self proclaimed “best locally owned pet supply store in Colorado Springs” has two stores and offers pet food, treats, accessories, vitamins and beds and sells birds and reptiles. Owned by Dustin Haworth.



The Takeaway

- Ordinance places a reasonable restriction on two pet stores that currently *choose* to sell commercially-raised puppies, but clearly do not have to
- Ordinance gives the stores 8 months to sell the puppies they have and convert to a products and services model
- Ordinance allows stores to adopt out dogs/cats from shelters/rescues if they wish to still have dogs/cats in their stores, but they do not have to
- Ordinance allows stores to partner with local shelters/rescues to host adoption events (many stores claim adoption event days are their highest grossing because adopters tend to buy all the food, toys, bowls, beds, etc. they need for their new pet in the store, and often become lifelong, loyal customers)

Online puppy sellers

- Since passage of the 2013 “retail rule” USDA regulations require breeders who sell online to be licensed and inspected—the same as breeders who sell to pet stores.
- Pet stores cater to impulse buyers. We regularly hear from consumers who wouldn’t have bought a puppy at all if they and their children didn’t get lured in by the cute puppy in the pet store window.
- Pet stores cater to consumers who want to meet a puppy in person before purchase. This is not possible with online sales.
- There is no evidence that pet store laws lead to increased online sales!



After Your “YES” Vote

- Support from *your constituents* who want to see a humane pet store ordinance enacted
- One step closer to enactment of legally-sound ordinance that has been proven successful in other localities
- A delayed effective date, allowing impacted stores time to convert to more humane business model
- Community support for pet stores that cut off ties to puppy mills
- Join other conservative communities across the nation in demonstrating this is a bipartisan, cross-cultural issue
- Set the stage for state & federal action in the future