



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUBSM

Dennis B. Sprung
President and
Chief Executive Officer

March 30, 2007

The Honorable Mike Eng
Chair, Assembly Business and Professions Committee
ATTN: Tracy Rhine
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 94249

Dear Mr. Chair:

The American Kennel Club (AKC) is extremely concerned about Assembly Bill 1634, which would require dogs and cats over four months of age be spayed or neutered unless an intact animal permit is obtained by the owner. On behalf of the 482 AKC-affiliated dog clubs in California, over 5,000 clubs nationwide, and the millions of dogs who call California home, AKC urges you to oppose this bill.

As a not-for-profit organization founded in 1884, the American Kennel Club has been devoted to the advancement and welfare of dogs for 123 years. The AKC supports sound, enforceable, non-discriminatory legislation to govern dog ownership. The American Kennel Club also conducts outreach and education for breeders to ensure that they are engaging in responsible breeding programs.

Local responsible breeders should be viewed as assets to their communities. These breeders make serious commitments to their animals by raising healthy, well cared-for dogs and by working to ensure that puppies are placed with responsible owners. These breeders are in a unique position to support new pet owners and exemplify responsible animal ownership. Responsible dog breeders and owners are models for their communities and should not be penalized by being required to purchase potentially expensive intact animal permits, as AB 1634 would mandate.

The “exemption” in AB 1634, allowing issuance of an intact animal permit, requires that a cat or dog be registered as a purebred with a pedigree from the American Kennel Club, the United Kennel Club, the American Dog Breeders Association, the International Cat Association, or a recognized registry approved by the local animal control agency to qualify for the permit. This provision, however, is not really an exemption as much as it is a potentially onerous assessment targeting responsible breeders, as local jurisdictions are given free reign to set the amount of the intact animal permit, so long as it complies with AB 1634’s requirement that the fee be “reasonably necessary” :

Article 3. 122336.2. (c) states “the amount of the fee for an intact permit shall be determined by the local jurisdiction, and shall be no more than what is reasonably necessary to fund the administration, enforcement and outreach efforts of that jurisdiction’s intact permit program”

By not specifying a set fee for the intact permit, there is the possibility that intact permit fees could easily be set at hundreds of dollars per exemption. If a jurisdiction sets an intact permit fee that is excessively high, punitive, and unreasonable, the proposed law will provide no redress to local constituents for excessive fees other than costly litigation to seek relief from unwarranted intact animal permit costs.

Existing California law (Food and Agriculture Code, 33804.5) already requires that a fee for dog licenses issued by a locality for intact animals cost twice as much as those issued to spayed or neutered dogs. Requiring responsible dog owners and breeders who choose to keep their animals intact to purchase an additional permit serves no justifiable purpose while imposing a significant additional financial burden on responsible citizens who are not part of the problem.

Additionally, allowing local jurisdictions the right to approve registries as acceptable qualifications for granting the intact animal permit will be impossible to consistently enforce. There are more than 35 for-profit all-breed dog registries in the United States, not counting numerous specialty and rare breed registries. This will result in a great variance of acceptable registries across local governmental entities. Failure to recognize some registries could subject municipalities to litigation.

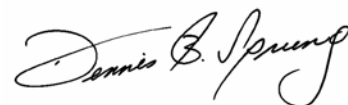
AKC-approved events positively impact state and local economies. AB 1634 jeopardizes that significant impact. The AKC conducts ongoing research regarding the economic benefits of our events, and our most recent survey data of January 2006 identifies that 1,395 AKC-approved events were conducted in California, with 342,020 dogs entered by 290,566 owners. Based on that data, those owners contributed approximately \$92 million to local California economies. This figure rises quickly when one adds the additional thousands of dollars AKC clubs spend on bringing judges to California by paying their transportation, hotel, restaurant, and other expenses; and judges' personal spending when visiting the state. AKC-affiliated clubs also rent hundreds of venues throughout California to conduct events. As dog shows are a family sport, large spectator admission fees generate additional revenues for cities and towns statewide.

Further affecting the financial impact of AKC events, AB 1634 does not exempt dogs brought into the state for exhibition from the mandatory spay/neuter or intact animal permit requirements. If the proposed legislation becomes law, AKC event participants would abandon California shows for venues in other states, necessitated by the draconian measures contained in AB 1634. This would result in enormous loss of revenue for hotels, restaurants, gasoline stations, and retailers of every description in California.

In fact, the AKC hosts the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship in Long Beach, California. This primetime television event is simulcast on the Animal Planet and Discovery channels for three hours on two consecutive nights. Along with the AKC Agility Invitational and the AKC National Obedience Invitational, these events bring almost 4,000 dogs, plus tens of thousands of exhibitors, fanciers, and spectators from all 50 states and 20 foreign countries, to California. With such an impact, I cannot believe that the California State Legislature would decide that AKC events are not welcome within the state of California. The passage of AB 1634 would clearly send that message.

The American Kennel Club strongly urges the Business and Professions Committee to not report AB 1634 out of committee.

Sincerely,



Dennis B. Sprung

cc: Members of the Assembly Business and Professions Committee
Assemblymember Lloyd Levine