

COMMERCIAL BREEDER BILL FACT SHEET

What will the bill do?

The bill ensures the humane care and treatment of dogs in the custody of large scale commercial breeders.

- Requires commercial breeders to register with the NC Department of Agriculture by providing an address and tax identification number
- Inspections are on a complaint driven basis only
- Requires current kennel standards set forth by the Department of Agriculture
- Provides confined dogs and cats enough space to easily sit, stand, turn around and lie down in a normal manner
- Requires proper ventilation and adequate lighting for animals confined indoors
- Requires structurally sound shelter with proper protection from inclement weather conditions for animals confined outdoors
- Ensures adequate sanitation conditions within the living spaces; and
- Requires proper handling, treatment and veterinary care

Who supports this bill?

This bill is endorsed by a broad coalition of animal protection organizations and is supported by the North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association.

Who is impacted by the bill?

The bill only impacts “commercial breeders,” defined as persons or entities which possess 20 or more adult intact dogs and are engaged in the business of breeding those animals and selling their offspring for sale. Small breeders who have 20 or fewer adult breeding dogs will not be affected by the bill.



Large scale breeding facilities are a problem in North Carolina.

Hundreds of North Carolina commercial breeders operate entirely free of state oversight, and the breeding dogs at these facilities are unprotected. With passage of legislation in Missouri, Oklahoma and other states across the country, North Carolina could fast become a magnet for some of the worst operators who will choose to move to a less restrictive state where they can continue operating sub-standard facilities without fear of regulation. Without adequate regulation, North Carolina could become a magnet state for the worst “puppy mill” operators. This bill is similar to laws enacted in other states.

Dogs’ most basic needs are not being met.

In North Carolina, thousands of breeding dogs are forced to live in cramped, barren wire cages for years on end. These dogs often don’t have the basics of food and water, shelter from the blistering heat or bitter cold, regular veterinary care, or exercise outside their cages. They receive little or no socialization and often exhibit severe behavioral and genetic abnormalities. When they no longer produce a profit, they are simply discarded or killed.

Consumers are paying severe financial and emotional costs.

Most pet owners would never consider putting their own dogs in a tiny wire cage for the rest of their natural lives, yet thousands of consumers unknowingly purchase puppies every year who were bred in these conditions. Due to shoddy breeding conditions, puppy mill puppies often arrive with a host of behavioral, genetic, and physical problems, from congenital heart or skeletal defects, to infectious disease like Parvovirus and respiratory infections – all of which may be unknown to the consumer until after their purchase is complete. This often leads to extreme financial and emotional expense associated with extensive veterinary

bills and the heartbreak of watching their puppy suffer.

Large scale breeding facilities can create a drain on local resources.

When conditions are allowed to deteriorate at puppy mills, the cost of cleaning up these operations can be crippling to local agencies. For example, in 2009, the Guilford County Animal Shelter took custody of 100 dogs



from a puppy mill. As is typical in puppy mill cases, the dogs had not received veterinary care and were malnourished, matted with their own fecal matter, and suffering from a range of parasites, diseases and conditions. The cost for transporting, boarding, and providing veterinary services to these dogs exceeded \$100,000. Many of the animals remained in the shelter for an extended period of time. Without private intervention, costs fall on the localities.

Does this bill address ownership of dogs?

No, this bill has no effect on anyone's right to own a dog, or any number of dogs. It simply ensures the humane care and treatment of dogs and cats in the custody of commercial breeders.

Aren't there existing laws to stop this?

North Carolina has no laws regulating commercial breeding operations unless they sell to research labs or pet stores. The majority of the breeders in North Carolina sell to individuals through internet sales and newspaper ads. Although North Carolina has anti-cruelty laws intended to address neglect and mistreatment of animals, most large-scale breeding facilities continue to operate in ways that mock these laws. Due to a loophole in the federal Animal Welfare Act, large commercial breeders who sell puppies directly to pet owners, including those who sell over the Internet, are exempt from any federal oversight. And even those that are subject to federal oversight are not providing the minimal standards of care required under the Act. The USDA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) recently released a report confirming that USDA inspectors regularly ignore horrific suffering at commercial dog breeding facilities and allow the facilities to continue to operate, unimpeded, despite repeated violations of the Act. Given North Carolina has no state law governing these facilities, these facilities are operating free from oversight, and the dogs and cats they keep are completely unprotected

No Fiscal Impact:

The bill requires a commercial breeder to apply for a commercial breeder registration and pay a fee of \$50.00 each fiscal year. And because many commercial breeders currently operate under the radar, it is anticipated that tax revenues will increase when these operations come into compliance with existing tax law.



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