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**Contact:** Bryan Clenahan | [bryan.clenahan@gmail.com](mailto:bryan.clenahan@gmail.com) | 518-253-7057

## **Albany County Legislator Bryan Clenahan and Members of the County Legislature Introduce Legislation to Regulate Pet Sellers and Breeders**

(Albany, NY) Albany County Legislator and prime sponsor Bryan Clenahan and fellow Legislators Doug Bullock, Noelle Kinsch, Alison McLane-Lane and Joseph O'Brien have introduced legislation to regulate pet sellers and breeders in Albany County. The Legislators have introduced this proposed Local Law with the support and assistance of the New York State Animal Protection Federation and the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society.

“We need strong local legislation to protect animals and consumers from unscrupulous puppy mill and pet store operators. The current State laws have not adequately protected animals and consumers – there are too many animals suffering in cruel, abusive and deplorable conditions and too many people suffering the heartbreak of an sick and suffering pet. Our Local Law will end this abuse and suffering in Albany County.”

In 2013, the State Legislature passed S.3753-A/A740-A (introduced by Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal and Senator Mark Grisanti), which repealed the long-standing ban on local governmental oversight of pet stores and dog breeders. In January 2014, the Governor signed the bill into law. The law will allow local governments to address the boom in the influx of pet store animals from bad sources and “backyard breeders.”

The proposed Local Law will:

- require the permitting of pet sellers, with permits being given only to sellers in compliance with this Local Law and any other animal protection laws;
- provide for regular inspection of pet sellers;

- require pet sellers to provide minimum standards of care in housing, sanitation, feeding/watering, handling, veterinary care, exercise, fire safety and grooming for every dog or cat in their custody or possession;
- provide consumer protection to Albany County pet buyers;
- set minimum standards of care for dog source breeders;
- ban pet sellers in Albany County from knowingly importing, offering for sale, selling or bartering any dog from a source breeder that does not comply with the standards of care in this Local Law; and
- provide that a violation of this Local Law will be a civil offense with a fine of \$100-\$500 per violation.

Libby Post, Executive Director of the NYS Animal Protection Federation, said: “This Local Law couldn't come soon enough. We recently saw a horrible puppy mill incident in Montgomery County where a Border Collie breeder was finally brought to justice for not providing adequate shelter and care for his dogs—including puppies—as the polar vortex bore down on the Capital Region with sub-zero temperatures and considerable snow. The New York State Animal Protection Federation is happy to work with Albany County to stop puppy mills before more atrocities happen.”

Brad Shear, Executive Director of Mohawk Hudson Humane Society, says: “For far too long, humane societies and animal shelters have had to pay the price for disreputable breeders. When puppy mills are uncovered and brought to justice, those dogs end up with our organizations—the folks in each community who believe in treating animals humanely and with dignity. We feed them, care for them, nurse them back to health and adopt them out. We also carry the financial burden. This Local Law will give our County Government the power to stop puppy mills and the irresponsible pet shops who sell these animals.”

The Local Law would empower the Albany County Sheriff with enforcement authority, but it would also allow the delegation of authority under the Law to a local not-for-profit animal protective organization. Companion legislation to provide enforcement authority to the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society, with the Sheriff's oversight, will be introduced next month.

Albany County Sheriff Craig Apple said, “It's a pleasure to partner with the Legislature and Mohawk Hudson Humane Society to assure that our residents and consumers are receiving healthy and safe pets. This legislation will provide protection for the pets and consumers, and the Sheriff's Office is glad to assist in that affirmation.”