



*NYSAPF is the advocacy voice of New York's humane societies, SPCAs, non-profit and municipal animal shelters*

## **Memo in Support of A.351 (Paulin)/S.3830 (Metzger) Relating to the Definition of Pet Dealers**

The New York State Animal Protection Federation supports lowering the sales threshold for home-based breeders to qualify for state licensure as detailed in A.351/S.3830.

Presently, only pet stores and any dog/cat breeders selling 25 or more animals directly to the public annually are licensed and inspected by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. It has been relatively easy to oversee pet stores since they are commercial establishments. Much more difficult is the oversight of home-based breeders. At this point, home-based breeders have to voluntarily report the number of animals bred and sold.

While there are many well-intentioned and honest home-based breeders, there are also dishonest ones who use the current sales threshold to avoid regulation.

Only 114 breeders are licensed by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets thus far in 2019. This just scratches the surface of the number of dog breeders selling these companion animals throughout New York. Hardly a month goes by when there isn't a media story about the horror of an unlicensed breeder who keeps more than 25 dogs in squalor and unsafe conditions.

When these dogs are rescued from these horrible situations, it is the state's animal shelters, humane societies, SPCAs and animal welfare organizations that bear the brunt. Each year, hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent by local humane societies, SPCAs, non-profit and municipal animal shelters to provide medical care and rehabilitation so that they can eventually be ready for adoption into a loving home. Adoption fees don't in any way make up for the funds expended. Despite the financial losses that come with taking care of these dogs, our members will continue to rescue, care and ready these animals for adoption because that is our mission.

It is time to give state regulators better tools to enforce existing pet dealer laws. A.351/S.3830 is a companion bill to the legislation signed by Governor Cuomo in January 2014 that allows local governments to regulate pet dealers above and beyond the state standards of care for such operations. A lower sales threshold will enable local governments to more effectively protect dogs by bringing disreputable breeders to justice.

The NYS Animal Protection Federation greatly appreciated the commitment of Assemblywoman Paulin and Senator Metzger to the welfare of New York's companion animals through thoughtful, responsible animal welfare policy. The Federation urges the Assembly Agriculture Committee members to favorably report this important legislation.