



Tuesday, February 13, 2024

HB 2542

Proponent

Terry Humphrey

Kansas Pet Advocates Executive Director

Chair Rahjes and members of the House Agriculture Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony. I am Terry Humphrey, Executive Director of the Kansas Pet Advocates, and our testimony is joined by over two dozen coalition partners listed at the end of our testimony. These include animal shelters and rescues, animal control departments, and commercial pet entities working to advance the health and wellness of pet animals in Kansas.

Kansas Pet Advocates strongly supports HB 2542. This bill results from countless hours of meetings led by the Kansas Department of Agriculture with our organization and several other stakeholders. We believe that the provisions in this bill will elevate Kansas's reputation in the pet animal industry.

This bill is the result of compromise among most stakeholders and includes several positive provisions to update pet animal care standards and improve enforcement. It's a simple bill. For example, it addresses **adequate watering, authorization for regulations, closing inspections**, and **adding a rescue network representative** to the Kansas Pet Animal Advisory Board (KPAAB).

Adequate watering: Following best practices defined by the American Veterinary Medical Association and veterinary schools, and as already required under the federal Animal Welfare Act, HB 2542 requires continuous access to potable water for dogs and cats, when pet animals are on the premises. It does not apply when pet animals are in transit, or when otherwise recommended by a veterinarian.

Authorization for regulations: HB 2542 permits the Animal Health Commissioner to adopt regulations regarding exercise and socialization, disease prevention, and biosecurity. Several organizations, including Purdue University School of Veterinary Medicine and the American Kennel Club, state proper puppy socialization and exercise are imperative during the first three months of life. Proper socialization helps ensure a puppy is successful in a home environment and is not dangerous or later surrendered to a shelter due to behavioral issues.

It also provides guidelines for the animal health commissioner to consider when enacting regulations including (1) Best management practices for the care and well-being of animals; (2) disease prevention; (3) morbidity and mortality data to the extent such data is available; and (4) generally accepted veterinary medical standards.



Closing inspections: The last Legislative Post Audit demonstrated a need for the Animal Facilities Inspections (AFI) program to conduct closing inspections to ensure that facilities have ceased operations. AFI has also experienced an issue with licensees failing to renew their licenses but continuing to operate. This provision requires that when a licensee who maintains dogs or cats notifies the AFI program that they will cease operating, AFI visits the facility to perform a quick visual inspection to confirm that operations have ceased. Trust but verify.

Rescue network representative: When rescue networks were added as a distinct license category in the nineties, a corresponding representative was not added to the KPAAB. Every other distinct license category has a representative to advise the AFI program. As of January 29, 2024, there are 51 licensed rescue networks in Kansas without a representative on the KPAAB. However, the six licensed animal research facilities and eight licensed animal distributors each have one representative on the Board.

While some may lump shelters and rescues together, they are two distinct license categories with significantly different business operations. Shelters have a brick-and-mortar facility, while rescues operate a network of foster homes to care for homeless dogs and cats in their communities.

Adding a rescue network representative does not threaten the voice of the other licensees' representatives on the advisory board. Rather, it addresses a long-standing inequity by ensuring all distinct license categories are on the KPAAB to educate the KDA and AFI programs.

Note, as you study the chart that shows the makeup of the KPAAB, that this board does not make rules or regulations. The board is only advisory.

*By statute, the KPAAB also includes a licensed veterinarian representative and an unaffiliated public member

License Category	KPAAB Seats	Licensees (1.29.2024)
Animal Breeder	1	71
Animal Distributors	1	8
Animal Research Facilities	1	6
Animal Shelter/Pound (includes 1st Class, 2nd Class, and 3rd Class)	1	239
Boarding and Training	1	204



PET ADVOCATES

Hobby Breeder	1	56
Pet Shop (includes temporary pet shops)	1	69
Rescue Network	0	51
Retail Breeder	1	120

In closing, HB 2542 is a common-sense update to the Kansas Pet Animal Act. It will help the Kansas Department of Agriculture Animal Facilities Inspection program and the shelters and rescues across Kansas. Please pass HB 2542 as written. Thank you.

- Allen County Animal Rescue Facility (La Harpe)
- Atchison County Humane Society (Atchison)
- Brown County Humane Society (Hiawatha)
- CCARE Animal Rescue and Education Center (Clay Center)
- Double 25 Animal Sanctuary (Derby)
- Golden Belt Humane Society (Great Bend)
- Greater Kansas City Humane Society (Kansas City)
- Great Plains SPCA (Merriam)
- Hands of Hope Rescue (Great Bend)
- Have a Heart TNR (Clifton)
- High Plains Humane Society (Hays)
- Humane Society of the United States
- Hutchinson Humane Society (Hutchinson)
- Independence Humane Society (Independence)
- Kansas Animal Control Association
- Leavenworth County Human Society (Lansing)
- Meowy Matchmakers (Johnson County)
- Nika Orebaugh (Sedgwick County Animal Control Officer)
- Northeast Kansas Animal Welfare Foundation (Topeka)
- Pals Animal Rescue (Wichita)
- Pawnee County Humane Society (Larned)
- Prairie Paws Animal Shelter (Ottawa, Manhattan)
- SEK Humane Society (Pittsburg)
- Shanti Mikoklajczk (member of Sedgwick County Animal Care Advisory Board)
- Spay/Neuter Kansas (Wichita)
- SRL All Breed Dog Rescue (Minneapolis)
- Western Plains Animal Refuge (Hays)
- Wichita Animal Action League (Wichita)