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January 28, 2018

Re: HB 2477
House Agricultural Committee

Dear Chair Hoffman and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of a foster home based rescue group in Wichita called Wichita Animal Action League (WAAL). **We strongly urge you to oppose HB 2447**, a bill to raise fees for the Animal Facility Inspection Program (AFI), for three reasons:

- 1) Even as a non-profit, we are saving our local and state government money while working on a shoestring budget and this bill would end that.** Oftentimes our local animal controls will reach out to us and ask us to take on monumental vet bills for stray animals that the city cannot afford. This saves our local cities thousands of dollars every year. If we are forced to pay higher inspection fees every year we will not be able to continue this partnership and that financial obligation will once again fall back on the city. Additionally, we designate thousands of dollars for spay/neuter services to help decrease pet overpopulation, thus reducing stray intake at local animal controls and resulting in lower operational budgets.
- 2) Breeders are costing the state tens of thousands of dollars in fines.** If your goal is to makeup for a deficit within the department you need to look no further than the hobby and licensed breeders in the state that often and repeatedly fail and/or no-show for their inspections. These acts are costing the state (and its tax-payers) an estimated **\$50,000- \$60,000** in extra personnel costs every year. This group is single handedly causing the deficit in the department with their irresponsibility; why is it the rescues duty to correct (aka pay for) it?
- 3) There is currently a Legislative Post Audit being conducted in the Department.** It would be the best use of time and effort for all parties to wait until it is complete to make any decisions regarding the program.

There is a painfully obvious discrimination in how the KS Pet Animal Act is being applied to shelters/rescues and breeders. This is not acceptable. Rescues and shelters are actively working to solve operational budget shortfalls and lack of resource problems while adhering to stricter rules and guidelines. Breeders, on the other hand, are in fact creating budgeting problems and being held to lower standards. ***Raising shelter/rescue fees is not the answer.***

On behalf of WAAL Rescue, I urge you to oppose HB 2447.

Best,

Sarah Coffman
Founder/Executive Director
Wichita Animal Action League