

Puppies Extraordinaire, LLC  
Lorilee Thomas  
17454 Hwy K 9  
Whiting, KS 66552

March 15, 2022

RE: OPPOSITION OF SB 551

Dear Senators;

My name is Lorilee Thomas and I have been a professional breeder for 23 years. I currently have the privilege of serving and representing my peers as a member on the Pet Animal Advisory Board. I am here today in OPPOSITION of Senate Bill 551 and ask that you not pass this bill. Last week we had our quarterly advisory board meeting, and we were asked to send a resolution to the legislators supporting a bill that we had not seen. Thankfully, the majority vote of the board was not in favor of support. We then voted with the majority to send a resolution that we DO NOT SUPPORT Senate Bill 551. We did vote to support the funding bill. I'm hoping that you received copies of these.

My experience with service on the advisory board has been very supportive of the agency and their oversight and have supported increases to our license fees in order to ensure the program would be properly funded. One of our duties as members of this board, as listed in statute, is to advise the Animal Health Commissioner on hiring a director to implement the Kansas Pet Animal Act – which we did and now that position, which had been recently vacated, has been filled. Our board has discussed appreciation of the money approved by legislation for enhancing the Animal Facilities Inspection program and as a member of the board I would like to see the Department of Agriculture use this money wisely. For years now the department has complained of how the AFI program has drained their funds. With an enhancement in place, I would suggest that the Kansas Department of Agriculture use this money to hire and give raises as they proposed to do upon receiving an enhancement and **then** show the necessity of why it should be a stand-alone division.

The new director of the program has only been working there for a couple of months. Why not give her time to learn? And who better to teach her than the Animal Health Commissioner -who according to current law oversees the Kansas Pet Animal Act. How can taking the Animal Health Commissioner out of overseeing the health of Kansas pets give more credibility? Governors and Secretaries will come and go just as the seasons change. The Animal Facilities Inspection program shouldn't change with every season.

Please keep the stability of the program where it is and not put it at risk to change every time a new Governor or Secretary of Agriculture comes along.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lorilee Thomas