

The Honourable Mark Furey
Chair, Law Amendments Committee

Dear Mr. Furey:

As, I sat down to write this submission for you and the other 8 members of the Law Amendments Committee I wondered what could I, as an ordinary voting citizen, bring to the table that could make all of you understand why so many people are so passionately opposed to the newest revisions made within Bill -27. Then, I realized like probably many of you, I bring the experience of a life time of animal ownership. With one difference, I also bring a lifetime of animal rescue, as well as 10 plus yrs. as a Canadian Kennel member, and from just being the kid who loved going to work on her great uncles hobby farm where I was taught to respect and appreciate the animals that give us so much. Before I dwell on the reasons why Bill - 27 in my opinion is for great concern, I wish to share with you a quote, it is one that has been written on a piece of paper that I take with me where ever I travel. Because inevitably my travels always seems to land me where animals and humans convene. **"You can usually tell that a man is good if he has a dog who loves him." – W. Bruce Cameron (author, A Dog's Journey)**

I carry that quote with me because I have been very lucky over the years that I have walked this earth to be blessed with an animal or animals that have loved me enough to walk it with me. Up until 14 years ago, they were all rescue animals with the exception of a tarantula. Through the years I have been the owner of everything from cats, dogs to chinchillas and guinea pigs. And for 2 weird weeks a motherless baby beaver, yes a beaver. Neglected and abused, they came to live at my house where they were shown love, attention and given protection from the cruelty that seems to run amuck in this world. And yet, you probably wonder why I so adamantly oppose Bill - 27. I can honestly say I have a multitude of reasons. 6 of them live in my home.

When the news of the revisions were announced, I decided to casually read the newest amendments to the bill and honestly I became concerned. For me as a pet owner, who loves my animals as members of my family, for my friends in the pet care industry, for my dog show friends and for all my friends who are conscientious and responsible breeders/farmers, who oddly enough fall into one or more of the aforementioned categories. I began to wonder why this bill revision was being rushed through the first and second readings and now sits with you and the other members of the Law Amendments Committee. These newest amendments are clearly coming on the face of the recent provincial court decision that indicated certain animal husbandry practices are accepted practices. I urge you to review that decision and the judge's carefully reasoned analysis in his ruling. So here we are and as it stand Bill - 27 sits with you today with what seems to be little to no input from breeders and members of our small business pet care industry. Yet from wording it seems that consult was done with the NSVMA, the SPCA and anti-breeder/farmer fractions. The other thing that came to mind was much of the new bill is what is already in the existing in the last version of the Animal Protection Act and taking issue with what has already been the law for quite some time may serve to weaken the case for concerns with the new parts of the legislation around the provisions on "cosmetic surgery" etc. are now featured in this latest revision. And yet again I wonder why?

So I sat down to do a more careful reading and while I do applaud the introduction of dog fighting laws, which we badly needed, I have to wonder why the SPCA needs all of this new power. These revisions seem to me to make them more powerful than our own police forces, and not like the actual animal rescuers their mandate says they are. Revisions like but not limited to the ones listed below are of great concern to me:

1 (g) (iv) - any animal designated as a farm animal by the minister

3 (2) (e) - An animal is in distress if the animal is (e) subjected to cosmetic surgery as defined in section 27

Section Animal Welfare Inspections

16 (3) Where any questions arise with respect to whether an animal is a farm animal, the Minister shall decide the question and the decision of the Minister is final and may not be appealed.

20 (b) conduct any test
what testing as this is not define

6 (a) require the production of any records relating to the care of an animal and remove those records temporarily for the purpose of making copies

Vet records like human medical records are confidential and protected, requiring a warrant.

20 (8) An inspector or peace officer and every person lawfully accompanying an inspector or peace officer may, while carrying out duties under this act, enter on or pass over any land or water, whether enclosed or not, without being liable for trespass and without the owner of the property having the right to object.

(There is no limit to what they can do now)

Protecting The Welfare of Animals

(7) Where an animal is not in distress, but the inspector has reasonable and probable grounds for believing that an animal has been abused or tortured by the actions of its custodian, the inspector may seize the animal.

Removed from the 2018 Act but was in the 2008 Act

7 (b) see the aid of, when necessary, and co-operate with municipal police forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

When animal is found in distress

(5) An inspector or peace officer who, on reasonable and probable grounds, believes that there is an animal in distress in a private dwelling place shall obtain a warrant to enter the private dwelling place for the purpose of carrying out duties pursuant to this section.

Then there is the changing of words to from ownership to guardian. As much as we all profess our animals are our family and to many people they are, within the federal laws of this country they are considered as property.

As I read these revisions I had many concerns for small businesses and hobbyists alike. Most of their business comes from word of mouth. Rumours and falsehood can end a small, local business. This bill leaves them open to loss of revenue and clients. If an accusation with no real basis was acted on. Pet owners do not want to work with companies and businesses that "may have" been under the watchful eye of an investigation, even if it was based on a false accusation. Reputations get tarnished. And that is with an actual investigation. Now you imagine how much worse it would be if a governing body could just walk in to your place of business or breeding barns/kennel with no nothing but supposition and seized your prize cattle, sheep or dogs or a client's dog, cat or horse. Small locally own businesses would be destroyed by false accusations that these revisions would allow. We mustn't forget that small locally owned businesses puts money back into our local communities. Types of business and hobbyists that maybe be effected are but not limited to:

Businesses such as:

Doggy Daycares
Boarding Facilities
Groomers
Animal Trainers
Animal Wranglers for movie productions

hobbyists such as:

Breeders
Hobby Farmers
Show people
Privately funded animal shelters and rescuers
foster animal homes

The reason I mention this is that many of our farmers/breeders participate in these hobbies, as well the occupations as primary or secondary jobs and as volunteers.

This leads me to speaking of my hobby, you see of those 6 reasons I mentioned earlier, 3 are show dogs, 4 if the retiree ever decides to come out of retirement. All are pure bred dogs registered within the Canadian Kennel Club. Because of loving and caring breeders who practice responsible and ethical breeding and accepted animal husbandry practices I have 6 of the greatest joys in my life. In my 10 plus years as a show exhibitor one of the main things I have learned is dog show people, spend money. And they like to spend it locally. So when we travel for shows we book our hotels in the locality of the show site, we seek our grooming facilities, restaurants, pet supplies we may have forgotten and other supplies in the community that the show is held in. We support local artisans and businesses who are wise enough to have booths at show sites. Where does this money go.. it goes back into the community. Not only the exhibitors but the hosting club also shops locally for show sites, clean - up crews, catering, ect But if it were not for breeders we would not be able to do this. I would never profess that every breeder in the world is responsible, ethical preservation breeders that would be like saying that every human is perfect. We don't live in an utopian world, we have to accept that like all things in life there is good with the bad. In my experience there has always been more good than bad.

One of the other things I have learned from dealing with breeders and farmers is both spend an exorbitant amount of money at vet clinics, buying locally sourced foods, and other much needed supplies. Not only that, they like to sell their animals that are not going to market or show homes, locally if they can, meaning there is more money back into our economy. Animal buyers are becoming more and more aware of the benefits of having full access to their breeder/farmer and their advice. Not only that, but more and more people are opting for pets vs children. These are people who want the very best for their animals from pet care, vet care and in the representatives who govern our provinces. I know because I'm one of those people.

At this point I would be remiss not to mention my animals in a roundabout way. At present there are 52 CKC breeds that allow for cropping and/or docking in their breed standard. Out of 188+ CKC breeds it is estimated that 174 breeds practice dew claw removal. Currently 2 of those breeds live in my home. As a dog owner, conformation show person, animal lover, rescuer and constituent, I feel the need to express my concern that these accepted animal husbandry practices will be taken away from our provinces local framers/breeders. I am asking this committee to respect our farmers/breeders right to uphold their breed standards, which were established by generations of experienced farmers/breeders who cared and continue to care deeply about their animals, and their heritage and the history they represent. They are what we call preservation breeders.

Research from countries that have banned cosmetic surgery indicate dramatic decreases in births of pups of previously docked and/or cropped breeds .Many breeders will leave the breed, thus removing valuable breeding lines. Remaining breeders will have to incorporate dropped ears and/or undocked tails into their breeds already shrinking breeding pool once again for correct conformation. The resultant is a decrease in genetic diversity which amplifies inherited health disorders. The loss of farmers/ breeders who stop farming/breeding will shrink revenues for animal medical research, animal affiliated companies, local businesses, events and communities. Some breeds could disappear altogether.

Our farmers\breeders are devoted caregivers of the animals they produce, they are not abusers. And yet in today's modern society they have been painted with a wide brush to be so, because people who do not understand the reasons for certain animal husbandry practices.

In a roundabout way this brings me back to Bill-27 and the SPCA. This bill would give unheard - of powers to a non-profit organisation that has no legislative oversight in its actions and is being given powers of search and seizure above and beyond our own law enforcement. At this time I would ask that you and the other members of this committee postpone any decisions and allowing those of us who wish to work with you more time to gather our thoughts since we were only given short notice of this bill and the revisions. I hope that we the animal loving community and this committee can collectively work together in developing a much more universal bill which will allow you a more inclusive way to govern without alienating our citizens.

Sincerely,
Dawn Beck

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