
From: Andrew Fenton <[REDACTED]>
Sent: September 24, 2018 12:53 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Submission to the Law Amendments Committee re Bill 27 - The Animal Protection Act

2 Windermere Road,
Halifax, NS B3N 1M9

Dear members of the Law Amendments Committee,

It is my understanding that Section 27 of the proposed Animal Protection Act (Bill 27) is being opposed by some members of the show industry and specialty breeders who see this as curtailment of their businesses. I want to commend the efforts of Minister Colwell to introduce Section 27 and take a stand on cosmetic alterations to animals when the alterations have no medical purpose or benefit. I wholly support moves to prevent owners of companion animals using surgery on these animals solely for cosmetic purposes. Such alternations can cause quite significant distress and, as they are unnecessary, constitute a wrong perpetrated against these animals.

I would like to take the time to express disappointment at other parts of the bill. Though I am aware that this is standard course for bills such as this one, the distinction between companion animals and farm animals introduces an unjust favoring of the welfare of companion animals. The injustice can be evidenced in two respects: (1) "farm animal" is a social, not natural kind; (2) just limiting my discussion to mammals for the sake of brevity, all mammals possess such subcortical structures as the limbic system and insula which are implicated in their reward system as well as their capacities for emotions and to experience the unpleasantness of pain. Re (1): Some companion animals, such as dogs and cats, are farm animals in other regions of the world. The commitment to their welfare in this bill, were it to be just, must be consistent. Justice is not compatible with inconsistency, where the relevant beneficiaries are not relevantly different from those denied relevantly similar benefits or protections. That consistency would require seeking the protection of dogs and cats from distress, as described in this bill, even were they regarded as farm animals elsewhere. Being a farm animal here, therefore, should hold no more power in denying a relevantly similar animal such benefits or protections than it would justly deny what we consider humane regard for companion animals in regions of the world where they are raised as farm animals. Re (2): The basis for ascriptions of distress to dogs and cats, and other mammals, is the presence of such neural structures as the limbic system and insula that are implicated in capacities for emotions and experiencing pain as unpleasant. (We can extend this claim to other vertebrates when we refer to regions of their brains that are functionally equivalent to those found in mammals.) There is no evidence that the potential for distress in dogs and cats is greater than the potential possessed by farm animals (who are not dogs or cats). Given this relevant similarity and the shared category of 'farm animal' depending on where one travels our planet, justice requires providing farm animals the same benefits and protections enjoyed by companion animals.

Fundamentally, the animals described in this act are best regarded as sentient beings not things. Their sentience is recognized in the bill's discussion of their distress as well as deference to CCAC guidelines on the use of animals in science, as sentience plays an integral role in CCAC guidelines geared toward avoiding unnecessary stress or distress of animal research subjects. A laudable standard for caring for companion animals is providing them with a life worth living. This is rightly reflected in this bill. This due regard is no less required for animals used in such industries as agriculture and the sciences. I would ask that you give this

consideration and seek to include, in this bill, relevantly similar benefits and protections of farm animals accorded companion animals that will ensure they too have opportunities to enjoy lives worth living.

Sincerely,
Andrew Fenton

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Andrew Fenton, PhD

Assistant Professor
Department of Philosophy
Dalhousie University

Webpage: <https://sites.google.com/site/afenton/>

Dalhousie University rests on the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We are all treaty people.