

# HUMANE PET STORE ORDINANCE

**Background:** Selling commercially raised puppies and kittens in pet store raises serious animal welfare and consumer protection issues. By prohibiting pet stores from selling commercially raised dogs and cats but allowing them to partner with shelters and rescues to host adoption events and sell products and services, lawmakers can protect consumers and promote humane businesses.



Over 400 localities across 31 states and five states have already enacted this policy. New York is poised to become the 6<sup>th</sup> state, with legislation on the Governor's desk.

## **A humane pet store ordinance will reduce the demand for puppy mill puppies.**

- Pet stores can only fill their cages everyday with dozens of 8-week-old puppies of varying breeds by sourcing from large-scale commercial breeders that place profit over the wellbeing of their dogs.
- Public records show the vast majority of puppy-selling pet stores source most of their puppies from large scale commercial breeders and brokers, many with egregious animal welfare records.
- Responsible breeders never sell to pet stores because they demand to meet prospective buyers in person and their breed clubs' codes of ethics do not allow it.

## **A humane pet store ordinance will protect puppies from the puppy mill-pet store pipeline.**

- Pet store puppies are born into cruel and unsanitary conditions, taken from their mothers at just 7-8 weeks old, crammed into cages and trucked across the country in close proximity to other stressed and sick puppies, and then placed in pet store cages to be handled by inexperienced staff and consumers.
- Overcrowding, filthy conditions, and lack of basic veterinary oversight at commercial breeding facilities and during transport lead to many health issues once puppies reach pet stores. According to the CDC, 95% of pet store puppies have been pumped with antibiotics.
- Neither the USDA nor any state agency adequately protect breeding dogs or puppies, and USDA license does not mean a facility is not a puppy mill.

## **A humane pet store ordinance will protect consumers from a wide range of problems.**

- Pet stores charge premium prices for puppies by promising consumers the puppies are from quality breeders, yet if consumers could see the conditions the puppies were born into and transported in, they would overwhelmingly refuse to support that cruelty.
- Pet store puppies are often sick, costing consumers hundreds or thousands of dollars in veterinary bills, and sometimes leaving them with the heartbreak of having a new pet die or having to relinquish them.
- Contact with pet store puppies has led to an antibiotic-resistant disease outbreak that sickened over 100 Americans and led one CDC official to state that "it is difficult to control a whole system that lacks hygiene at many points and seems to use antibiotics instead."
- When consumers balk at the price of puppies, sales staff offer third party financing with low interest rates. Yet, pet store customers have unknowingly ended up with interest rates as high as 188%.

## **A humane pet store ordinance supports responsible pet businesses and pet acquisition.**

- The massive retail pet industry (\$123 billion and counting) is dominated by the sale of pet products and services, with dog and cat sales not even tracked anymore after steadily declining for years.
- Stores that have sold puppies in the past are now thriving with a products and services model, with some adding high demand services like grooming, training, or daycare.
- Residents will still be able to obtain the pet of their choice by adopting from a local shelter or rescue or seeking out a responsible breeder who sells directly to the public.