



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

June 1, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Browne
281 Main Capitol Building
Senate Box 203016
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3016

The Honorable Elder Vogel
362 Main Capitol Building
Senate Box 203047
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3047

The Honorable Stan Saylor
245 Main Capitol Building
PO Box 202094
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2094

The Honorable Dan Moul
416 Irvis Office Building
PO Box 202091
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2091

To the Chairs of the Agriculture and Appropriations Committees:

As we approach the last legislative session days of summer, I would like to take this opportunity to discuss an urgent priority of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. For most of the statutory changes that the Department is seeking, on behalf of the agricultural community, there have been bills moving through both chambers with bipartisan support. The efforts that each of you, your caucus members, and staff have undertaken are greatly appreciated and a constant reminder that we all share the desire to support Pennsylvania's largest industry. However, there is one legislative priority that we are seeking for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year that still needs your support: fully funding the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement through increased fees for individual dog licenses and kennel licenses.

This past weekend, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette ran an article written by Mary Kennedy Withrow, a member of Pennsylvania's Dog Law Advisory Board. In the article, Ms. Withrow lays out why she believes it's important to increase the fees for both individual dog licenses and kennel licenses, which have not increased in decades. Attached, please find a copy of Ms. Withrow's article for your review.

The time for this fee increase is now. The department cannot continue to support the bureau with funds that should be allocated to other bureaus; this is a bureau that was created to be self-sustaining. Dog law is operating with 14 vacancies and is unable to fully and effectively fulfill its mission to protect Pennsylvanians and our dogs. Kennels are not receiving as many inspections as we'd like to see, illegal kennels are likely flourishing without wardens proactively seeking them out, and public complaints (including dangerous dog attacks) are taking longer to be responded to or are being redirected to local law enforcement. For these reasons, I am requesting that the General Assembly pass language increasing the individual dog licensing fee from \$5 per year to \$10 per year, as well as increasing the kennel licensing fee by 50%. A \$5 per year increase on the individual dog licensing fee costs pennies a day per dog in Pennsylvania but would strengthen the ability of the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement to combat the proliferation of dangerous dogs, which is a clear and present danger to all Pennsylvanians and their pets. A 50% fee increase on kennel fees would raise the cost of a kennel licensing fee for the



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largest of kennels, those that host more than 500 dogs per year, by \$375 per year, which is still well-below the sale of one dog. This is an increase that good dog breeders are willing to pay to protect the integrity and reputation of the dog breeding industry in Pennsylvania.

It is my sincere hope that we can work together on fully funding the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Russell C. Redding".

Russell C. Redding
Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

CC: The Honorable Vincent Hughes
The Honorable Judy Schwank
The Honorable Matthew Bradford
The Honorable Eddie Day Pashinski