



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB<sup>SM</sup>

August 12, 2010

The Honorable David Eicks  
President  
City of Anderson Common Council  
120 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Anderson, Indiana 46016

**Re: Concerns with Ordinance 34-10 (Sterilization of Dogs and Cats and Breeder's Permit)**

Dear President Eicks and Members of the City of Anderson Common Council:

The American Kennel Club (AKC) writes on behalf of responsible dog owners and breeders in Anderson to express our concerns with Ordinance 34-10 regarding dog and cat sterilization and breeder's permits. We respectfully ask that you oppose this costly, unfair, and ineffective ordinance.

Mandatory spay/neuter (MSN) laws are ineffective because they fail to address the underlying issue of irresponsible ownership. The City of Anderson already has differential licensing for owners of intact and sterilized animals (§91.23) and kennel permit requirements for those owning four or more dogs and/or cats (§91.01 and §91.25). Furthermore, the city also has laws regarding at-large animals. The mandatory sterilization and breeder's permits proposed in this ordinance will merely punish those who are responsible owners and breeders, and the irresponsible owners who are not complying with current laws are likely to continue their behavior.

It is unfair and unreasonable to assume that intact animal owners are the cause of animal population concerns in the community, as shelter populations are based on a variety of factors. Economics is often a primary cause of shelter population increases, as families are forced to give up their pet when they can no longer afford to care for them or are relocating. Low cost spay/neuter clinics and public education programs designed to help citizens make good decisions before purchasing a pet and to help them care for those they own are a much more effective solution.

These laws can also generate significant economic and safety concerns for the community. Cities that have enacted mandatory spay/neuter laws have seen a significant increase in their animal control budget costs. Dallas, Texas, for example, saw a 22 percent increase in animal control costs and an overall decrease in basic licensing after enacting MSN policies in 2008. Unfortunately, some owners either choose to ignore animal control laws entirely, or give their pets to the public shelter to be cared for at the taxpayers' expense rather than pay for expensive sterilization surgery or breeder's permits. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, some owners also opt to avoid rabies vaccinations and other general veterinary care in order to hide their lack of compliance with MSN laws.

Local responsible breeders should be viewed as assets to their communities. These breeders make serious commitments to their animals by raising healthy, well cared-for dogs and by working to ensure that puppies are placed with responsible owners. They are in a unique position to support new pet owners and exemplify responsible animal ownership. Responsible dog breeders and owners are models for their communities and should not be penalized by being forced to comply with burdensome, unenforceable, expensive, and arbitrary regulations.

We respectfully urge the City of Anderson Common Council to focus on enforceable laws that will address the problem of irresponsible ownership in your community and not restrict the rights of responsible breeders. The AKC, the Indiana Purebred Dog Alliance (AKC's Indiana state federation), and responsible dog owners and breeders in your community would welcome the opportunity to work with you to develop effective, responsible legislation.

Sincerely,

Sheila Goffe  
Director, Government Relations