



Legislation Text

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An Ordinance to Add Chapter 92 (Humane Pet Acquisition) to Title VII of the Code of the City of Ann Arbor (ORD-23-18)

A. A significant number of puppies, kittens and rabbits sold at pet shops are sourced from large-scale commercial breeding facilities (“puppy mills”, “kitten mills”, and “rabbit mills”, respectively) which do not adequately provide for the health and welfare of the animals. According to the Humane Society of the United States, it is estimated that 10,000 puppy mills produce more than 2,400,000 puppies per year in the United States and that most pet shop dog, cats and rabbits come from pet mills.

B. The documented abuses endemic to puppy, kitten, and rabbit mills includes over-breeding, inbreeding, minimal to non-existent veterinary care, lack of adequate and nutritious food, water and shelter, lack of socialization, lack of adequate space, and lack of adequate exercise.

C. The inhumane conditions in puppy, kitten and rabbit mills lead to health and behavioral issues in the animals bred in those facilities, which many consumers are unaware of when purchasing animals from pet shops due to both a lack of education on the issue and in some cases misleading sales tactics by pet shops. Those health and behavioral issues, which may not present themselves until sometime after the purchase of the animals, can impose exorbitant financial and emotional costs on consumers.

D. Similar issues have been found with regard to the breeding of ferrets.

E. Current federal and state regulations do not adequately address the sale of pet mill dogs, cats, rabbits, and ferrets in pet shops.

F. Due in large part to pet overpopulation, thousands of dogs, cats, rabbits, and ferrets are euthanized in Michigan animal shelters annually.

G. Requiring pet stores to source animals from shelters and rescue organizations is likely to decrease the demand for puppies, kittens, rabbits, and ferrets bred in pet mills.

H. Sourcing from shelters and rescues will likely reduce pet overpopulation and thus the burden on state and local agencies which fund shelters and rescues, and financial costs on local taxpayers.

I. Across the country, thousands of independent pet stores, as well as large chains, operate profitably with a business model focused on the sale of pet services and supplies and on the sale of dogs, cats, rabbits, and ferrets. Many of these shops collaborate with local animal shelters and rescue organizations to offer space and support for showcasing adoptable homeless pets on their premises.

J. This Ordinance will not affect a consumer’s ability to obtain a dog, cat, rabbit, or ferret of their

choice directly from a breed-specific rescue organization, a shelter, or from a breeder where the consumer can directly see the conditions in which the animals are bred.

K. The City Council believes it is in the best interests of the City of Ann Arbor to adopt reasonable regulations to reduce costs to the City and its residents, to protect citizens who may purchase cats, dogs, rabbits, or ferrets from a pet shop or other business establishment, to help prevent inhumane breeding conditions, to promote community awareness of animal welfare, and to foster a more humane environment in the City.

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(See Attached Ordinance)

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Akmon, Cornell, Ghazi Edwin, Harrison and Disch