

**LETTERS FROM NEW YORK AND FLORIDA:
OPPOSITION TO WINONA COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DOG BREEDING FACILITIES**

The mass production of puppies and the selling and shipping of these puppies to pet stores and brokers nationwide illustrates this problem is not just a local issue.

The two attached letters were submitted to the Winona County Board in October 2022.

Update: The bill referenced in the New York letter was signed by the New York Governor. Due to concerns about “puppy mills” and the harm to animals and consumers, the State of New York now prohibits the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits in New York pet stores.

Winona County breeders had sold their puppies to New York pet stores. These breeders continue to sell to Florida pet stores and other stores.

October 19, 2022
Winona County Commissioners
Winona County Dog Breeding Facilities

Dear Winona County Commissioners,

As New York State director for Companion Animal Protection Society, I have seen an increase of puppies shipped from Minnesota to New York puppy stores. Recent shipments of puppies have come from John Henry Miller, who is a puppy broker located in Winona County. Puppies from various breeders have arrived sick, raising concerns about the conditions of kennels and the parents of these puppies.

These puppy shipments have prompted lawmakers in New York State to pass legislation prohibiting the sale of dogs, cats and rabbits in New York pet stores. The bill (S1130-A4283) has passed both houses with bi-partisan support. This bill is awaiting the Governor's signature.

Lawmakers in NYS as well as many other states recognize there is an animal welfare issue as well as consumer protection issue when it comes to out-of-state facilities shipping puppies, kittens, and rabbits. Documentation from USDA and state inspection reports prove beyond any doubt that the breeding dogs, cats and rabbits in these facilities are confined for life in cages or pens with little socialization (impacting mental health) and often limited veterinary care or poor nutritional food, among other factors. These animals are bred repeatedly to have their offspring sold nationwide to pet stores — including my state.

This outdated industry puts profit over the welfare and health of companion animals. The needs of healthy dogs in breeding kennels do not differ from dogs in our homes. Dogs need to run, play, go for walks, cuddle — be companions. Scientific research by respected veterinarians show dogs need positive human interaction. New York legislators have recognized these facts and taken action.

I am asking that the Winona County board also recognize the animal welfare concerns with breeding companion animals in these facilities. Issuing permits to these types of operations only allows the cycle to continue.

Winona County can become part of the nationwide solution to end the cruel mass production and shipment of companion animals by stopping the issuance of these permits. The action you take will send a message that Winona County prioritizes animal welfare and protecting consumers throughout the United States of America.

Sincerely,
Barbara Dennihy
New York Director Companion Animal Protection Society
barbara@caps-web.org
631-338-7303

LETTER FROM FLORIDA

Date: October 2022
TO: Winona County Commissioners
RE: Dog breeding facilities and puppies sold out of state

Dear Winona County Commissioners,

As a long-time resident of Florida, myself and others consistently fight against the influx of pet store puppies being trafficked into our state from other states, including Minnesota.

Multiple stores in Florida have received puppies from large dog breeding facilities located in your county.

Florida has passed 80 Retail Pet Sales ordinances to stop pet stores from selling these puppies and kittens. Commissioners in these jurisdictions have passed these local ordinances in response to the cries of residents who oppose these types of kennels. They recognize this is an animal protection issue as well as consumer protection. Some states have banned these puppy/kitten sales completely.

It is our hope that Winona County, who permits these kennels and allows this type of outdated business model to operate, will start to see the problem these puppy mills present — not only to your own community but to all the states where these puppies are sold. These innocent puppies take the place of dogs in local shelters who desperately need a home; some pet store puppies even end up in shelters because of behavior problems from being in a puppy mill. Animal rescues are overflowing all over the country, yet these puppy mills continue to breed tens of thousands to other states. Consumers in Florida see a cute little dog in the store window and often don't know where they come from; or if they ask, pet stores mislead and misrepresent where and how these puppies are bred.

When Sarasota County Florida passed their Retail Pet Sales ordinance, the commissioners were shocked by what they learned — dogs confined for years in kennels and bred repeatedly, consumer fraud by the pet stores, and the high cost of the puppies at the store. Puppies are sold for \$5000.00 in Florida pet stores and up to \$10,000 on the east coast of Florida. This is a money issue, plain and simple. Customers too have come forward in distress after buying one of these puppies who was sick and/or died soon after purchase.

I am respectfully asking county commissioners to be a solution to this problem.

Your county's granting of permits to these facilities, allowing the mass production and shipment of these animals to other states, hurts every state, county, and city where the puppies are shipped. This is not just a Winona County issue; this has become a Florida issue. We are trying to correct it in Florida by encouraging people to purchase from shelters, rescues or smaller, responsible breeders. But your support of these large breeding facilities breeders and the pipeline to Florida pet stores is hurting our efforts.

I ask you take action to prioritize animal welfare, not support and promote mass dog production that harms animals and consumers.

Sincerely,

Karen Ankerstar
3135 Hatton St, Sarasota, Florida