

Texas Dog Breeders Face New Regulations

Legislation seeks higher standards for dogs and cats used in commercial kennels.

Posted: March 13, 2009, 5 a.m. EST

A Texas lawmaker seeking higher standards for commercial dog and cat breeders in the state introduced legislation Tuesday which would require such operations to meet specified health and handling requirements.

House Bill 3180, filed by state Rep. Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston), sets minimum standards of care and housing for animals in breeding facilities. The bill will require commercial dog and cat breeding facilities to:

- * Obtain a commercial breeding license from the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, and pay an annual fee for renewal;
- * Allow inspections by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation;
- * Pay penalties for failure to meet licensing requirements.

Humane standards of treatment outlined in HB 3180 would require breeding facilities to:

- * Provide food at least once every 24 hours with continuous access to water;
- * Allow confined animals enough space to easily sit, stand, turn around, and lie down in a normal manner;
- * Provide adequate ventilation and adequate lighting for animals kept indoors;
- * Provide structurally sound shelter with proper protection from inclement weather conditions for animals housed outdoors;
- and
- * Maintain adequate sanitation conditions within the living spaces.

In addition, HB 3180 exempts hobby breeders who keep 10 or fewer adult intact animals, as well as nonprofit animal welfare groups with a 501(c) (3) tax status. The legislation also provides for proper handling, treatment, and immunization of animals for disease, and parasite and pest control, including proper care by a veterinarian and written health records for each animal.

"We just want to ensure that there is a guaranteed minimum standard of care and a level of humanness for all these animals," Thompson said in a statement.