

My name is Diane Drazek from Sherman Maine. I am here in person this morning to strongly not only urge you, but implore you to vote in favor of the additional language to the law at hand because it is that important to me.

The passage of this Law will help those Citizens, like myself, who currently have no recourse to anyone or any Agency when a Neighbor refuses to control the prolonged barking of their dog/s. I have owned my property for over 15 years. My particular case has gone on for the past 4+ years since the purchase of a neighboring property at that time, by an out of state buyer with the intention of using it as a full time breeding kennel taking advantage of the lack of ordinances and lack of zoning because my town has no charter, by-laws, or comprehensive plan.

The excessive unsupervised barking, yelping and howling (which all happen by the way) suddenly and abruptly destroyed my personal space from beyond her property line. My health, peace and quiet, enjoyment of my home and that of other neighbors has been shattered. The noise affects the attractiveness, value & saleability of my property which has a magnificent view of Katahdin.

I support this law because it will provide protection and recourse if and when such issues continue and occur. Why in all of these years, when reaching out to every possible official has no one been able to answer the following question, and I pose it to you all: "Why does a dog have more rights than I do?" Why can another person who is not responsible with their pet and or business dictate to me how I must live and accept it?

This is different than a dog barking because its owner comes home or a guest arrives. These are normal behaviours of dogs. However, 24 /7 365 barking with has to be detrimental to the dogs welfare as well and that is not addressed anywhere in any current Maine statute. It is time for something to be put into place that will provide relief from the disturbances. So living next to multiple barking dogs and litters of puppies for hours on end, at all hours, that are allowed to enter/ exit their kennel freely every day is very stressful.

It is known that many towns do not have Ordinances and some may want to keep it that way or are resistant to change. This action coming from the State level offers an umbrella for the communities without local government oversight available to them. Without it there is nothing they can do. This Law, however, does not propose to restrict anyone's freedoms to own a dog or a kennel if they are, have been and continue to be responsible owners. Should I not also have the freedom to be able to enjoy my home absolutely, as I choose if I don't disturb anybody? Why should they be able to disturb me?

This must pass because some Residents have been asking for help for years only to be told that there is nothing that can be done. Every Official I have spoken to or Agency I have contacted or researched (included below), all said that nothing can be done presently to deal with this because there is no mention or law specifically referencing barking dogs. So, after being told this consistently for 4 years in my case, the answer emerges & it is obvious. The necessary action is to adopt the Law.

This Law is quite specific actually, even though the opposition that you are about to hear would tell you otherwise. And if your dog/s are under control, do not bark unreasonably or cause a chain reaction to rile other dogs in your area, then this would probably not even apply to you.

In closing, this is a common sense case. Incessant barking is intolerable by any measure to a reasonable person. This or similar proposals have come up over the past 35 years. This is not a new or isolated concern, obviously and would actually save the State time and resources if passed. Times change and new laws, as you know, are to protect and promote the peace, well being and security of the Community and its members. They are meant to ensure fairness for all. Who wouldn't want that? Again, I sincerely urge you to vote in favor of this. Thank you.

- Local Officials, Town Animal Control Officer, Animal Welfare, the State Police, the State Inspector, the Maine Municipal Association, lawyers, the State Representative, the State Senator, Animal Control Officers from other towns, the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, the County Sheriff