



My name is Kathie Bangs. I am the President of the Collie Club of Maine, Inc. Our organization has had a rich history in Maine as one of the oldest breed clubs in the state, organized in 1950. This is our 75th year. We provide education on the Collie breed through public events and dog shows, a referral service for those looking to purchase a Collie and have also been involved in rescue situations, working shoulder to shoulder with the state Animal Welfare Department.

On behalf of my Board and club members, we strongly voice our opposition to proposed bill LD 1771. This bill which would eliminate municipal kennel licenses would place an unfair burden on our small-scale breeding community, requiring them to operate under the umbrella of a state facility kennel license. These are two completely distinct operations, one which retains a few dogs, as not only family pets, but who also finds enjoyment in producing a minimal number of litters, whose aim is to improve their breed, knowing that the majority of the puppies produced will go on to approved homes. As a small-scale breeder, their dogs are well cared for, do not run at large and in most cases are a welcomed edition to the residential community. You can't reclassify a private residence as a commercial facility and expect the owner to comply with stringent zoning regulations meant specifically for a commercial establishment. It would, in fact, make compliance impossible. There is no comparison to a commercial facility, zoned in a commercially zoned location, which is open to the public and includes pet shops, boarding kennels or facilities offering the sale of animals to the public that were not born and raised at that location.

To require the small scale, hobby breeder to not only pay a kennel fee, but also be required to license each dog individually, is an unfair expense. Prior to any puppies going forward to their new homes, these breeders provide the required health testing for their particular breed, make certain all vaccinations are in order and puppies are well socialized. They are also aware of the genetic background of their dogs and follow a code of ethics required by their National and Local breed clubs. A commercial establishment does not provide these services to the public.

We see much of the problem that exists today is more from a lack of staffing with ACO inspectors. How can this proposition possibility make any improvement in inspections by taking the responsibility out of the hands of the local municipalities, whose ACO's are familiar with the residents and know where the problems exist and having it be state run? Wouldn't a better pay scale for these inspectors attract more applicants?

We find the proposed LD 1771 to hardly be a commonsense approach and strongly urge a no vote on its implementation.