

Pet Life by Roberts Inc.

February 4, 2013

Members of Senate Ag Committee

1509 W. Crawford St
Salina, Ks
67401

Dear Sir or Madam:

I have been a licensed pet store since the initiation of this act. The history of the present act started as a concern over exotic pet bird imports and the disease risk they presented. This risk has largely been eliminated with federal quarantine rules. The act has gradually migrated into a political image law with animal rights concerns. Initially stores were visited on a quarterly basis by a licensed veterinarian, now we are visited semi annual by staff. The rates have increased substantially over the years and the benefit has decreased greatly.

I have several serious concerns with the proposed changes to the animal act. The nearly 100 percent increases in fees are unjustified and not viable for a small private business to absorb. The rates for a pet store are equivalent to a 10,000 head feed lot or swine operation. I don't think there is a relationship between housing a few domestic animals and a feed lot but yet the department of Ag is proposing the same dollar fee. There is also not a distinction for stores that do not sell dog or cats or for volume, one size fits all. I am a local business, yet I would be required to pay the same fee as a mega box store owned by an out of state hedge fund. This proposal will eliminate small business ownership in Kansas.

This act was not intended to be fee funded and now generally serves the purpose of producing a better quality pet for pet owners therefore I would propose additional forms of finance so the ones that benefit also provide funding. A few ways to do this would be to add an animal benefit charge to animal foods produced in Kansas which there are several or a charge added to vaccinations when pet owners see the vet. The cost of this program should be shared by the ones benefiting and demanding it.

I also do not feel that the department of agriculture should not be allowed to make appointments to the board. The appointees should also have some association to the industry they are trying to regulate. This proposed change is an invitation to special interest dominating the rule making process.

Additional concerns are the use of the word pet shop, I feel this should be "pet store" which presents a more current and professional image: much the same as pound being an animal shelter.

The proposed changes particularly the fee structure is not acceptable to sustain business operations in the state of Kansas. I feel the rate structure should remain the same for now until some serious thought is given to funding options and financial audits of the program can be provided.

Sincerely,

Mark Roberts
President
Pet Life by Roberts Inc.

Senate Agriculture Committee

Date: 2-6-13

Attachment # 23-1

Mark Roberts, Pet Store Owner
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