

Minnesota Humane Pet Store Legislation

An animal welfare and consumer protection measure that will drive the pet market towards more humane sources like shelters, rescues, and responsible breeders and address known problems by stopping the sale of puppy mill puppies in pet stores.

SF 370 (Bigam)/HF 858 (Kotzya-Witthuhn)



How the bill works

The bill prohibits the retail sale of dogs and cats while allowing pet stores to cohost adoption events with animal shelters and rescues. The vast majority of stores in Minnesota thrive without selling dogs and cats. They profit from selling products and services and many also host adoption events with local shelters and rescues to give back to their communities.

A humane pet store bill reduces the demand for puppy mill puppies.

It is documented that puppy mills (inhumane commercial breeding facilities that disregard the well-being of dogs for profit) supply Minnesota pet stores with puppies. Responsible breeders do not sell to pet stores because they want to meet prospective buyers in person. They have nothing to hide and allow prospective customers to see where puppies and breeding dogs live, negating the need for a retail sales outlet, and likely belong to a breed club that discourages selling puppies to pet stores. Even pet stores that want to avoid sourcing from mills aren't able to, because only large-scale commercial breeders can sufficiently fill their cages with 8-week-old puppies of varying breeds.

A humane pet store bill will protect consumers.

Humane Society of United States investigations have consistently revealed that pet stores charge premium prices for puppies with baseless guarantees that puppies are healthy, socialized, and come from humane, highly regulated breeders. In reality, most pet store puppies were born in puppy mills that raise dogs in unsanitary conditions most people would find appalling. Consumers often spend thousands of dollars caring for sick pet store puppies, in some cases only to suffer the heartbreak of their new pet dying. Many pet store puppies also have behavioral issues and struggle to transition from life in a cage to life in a family.

A humane pet store bill will address a public health risk.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warns consumers about the risks of pet store puppies. In 2017-18, over one hundred Americans were sickened with an antibiotic-resistant strain of *Campylobacter* causing dozens to be hospitalized. In its final report of the outbreak, the CDC stated that 95% of pet store puppies received antibiotics at, or before arriving at, a pet store. This indicates overuse of these drugs and that pet stores know their puppies are likely to be sick.

A humane pet store bill is business friendly.

The vast majority of pet stores in Minnesota are already in compliance with this legislation because they already do not sell puppies or kittens. There are fewer than ten pet stores in Minnesota that sell dogs and cats, yet nearly **140 do not sell dogs or cats**. The most successful pet stores—both large chains and small shops—profit from selling products and offering in-demand services. Many stores also host adoption events with local shelters and rescues to give back to their communities and drive consumers to their stores. A pet store owner currently selling puppies would be wise to follow the humane products and services model to tap into the \$72 billion pet market.

A humane pet store bill promotes pet adoption and does not impact responsible breeders.

Pet stores that host adoption events save lives and bring homeless pets to a retail setting where consumers might not otherwise be exposed to them. For those who wish to buy a puppy, consumers will still be able to seek out a responsible breeder whom they can meet in person. Responsible breeders never sell to pet stores because they only sell directly to the public, so they wouldn't be negatively impacted by this bill.

A humane pet store bill will close a gap in current law.

Puppies and kittens in Minnesota's pet stores can come from puppy mills anywhere in the country. Federal regulation of commercial breeders is minimal- so weak that dogs can be kept in a cage only 6 inches larger than the dog for the dog's whole life- and enforcement is severely lacking. Minnesota does not inspect the source of all puppies in stores nor conditions within pet stores.

Maine, Maryland, California and over 370 localities across the nation, including St. Paul, Roseville, Carver, and Eden Prairie, MN, have enacted humane pet store laws.

For more information, contact Humane Society of the United States Minnesota State Director Christine Coughlin at ccoughlin@humanesociety.org.



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