



NJ COALITION OF RESPONSIBLE PET STORES

New Jersey Pet Stores Promote Animal Welfare and Consumer Protections

The New Jersey Coalition of Responsible Pet Stores is a group of like-minded small business owners who share a passion to connect beautiful, purposefully bred puppies with people seeking a special companion pet. Whether you've always wanted a specific breed, have allergy issues or size requirements, or perhaps seek a working/companion dog with special attributes, we pride ourselves on making those unique connections. The Coalition works with only a small group of breeders who pass rigorous, unannounced inspections by the United States Department of Agriculture, state and local inspections, as well as stricter requirements pursuant to New Jersey law, and far more stringent individual requirements of our coalition store owners.

To put it simply, animal welfare is paramount to our operations and guides each and every decision we make. We will not source our animals from inhumane puppy mills. Despite outrageous claims from animal activists, this fact is already a strict requirement of existing New Jersey law – the Pet Purchase Protection Act (PPPA). The PPPA is the most demanding law of its kind in the country. All puppies sold in pet stores in New Jersey come from breeders licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture and comply with very strict standards of care. Together, our own principles and complementary state and federal laws ensure that New Jersey has the most comprehensive animal welfare standards for pet stores in the country.

We only source our puppies from the best breeders. Sick puppies do not sell, and sick parents do not produce healthy puppies. USDA breeder inspections not only cover animal health and husbandry but also facilities management, housing and shelter, exercise and socialization plans, cleaning and sanitation policies, record-keeping, personnel qualifications and of course veterinary care.

New Jersey's nation leading PPPA requires that pet shops work only with breeders with near perfect inspections, which limits qualified breeders even more. Store owners' personal requirements shrink that available pool significantly. Of the 1,500 eligible breeders pursuant to the PPPA, New Jersey's pet shops choose to work with only between 60-80 in any given year.

Unfortunately, a small group of activists in New Jersey have embraced a national legislative campaign promoting misinformation and emotion in an effort to remove consumer choice and drive all pet sales to under-regulated shelters and rescues. Most of the dogs in these shelters do not come from licensed breeders and, in some instances, are purchased from the very puppy mills activists publicly seek to shutdown and adopted out with significant fees. It is the shelters and rescues that most residents seek out to "adopt" their new pet. And, as will become clear, it is New Jersey's shelters and rescues that allow puppy mills to exist.

Pet store bans that require stores like ours to obtain puppies only from shelters and nonprofit organizations do nothing to stop sub-standard breeders. Commercially bred dogs continue going to consumers in places with such bans, including California and Maryland, by way of nonprofit rescue groups and the auctions. Further, pet store bans do nothing to mitigate the proliferation of online advertisements for pets, which the Better Business Bureau recently estimated to be fraudulent 80 percent of the time. Removing local stores will serve only to exacerbate consumer fraud concerns. A system that demands dogs be sold only through rescues and shelters removes all accountability, consumer protections, and ability to ensure that "puppy mill" puppies remain out of New Jersey. (For more information see the report available at <https://washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/investigations/dog-auction-rescue-groups-donations>).

The bottom line is that the Pet Purchase Protection Act is working as designed. Substandard breeders have been removed ~~several years, we stand ready to provide you with accurate and detailed information that will assist you in making informed decisions.~~