



Kansas Pet Professionals

*Dedicated to Ensuring the Health of KANSAS Pets
and the Humane Care of ALL Animals.*

March 22, 2023

House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

Written Testimony for House Bill 2437

Dear Representative Rahjes and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony regarding House Bill 2437. Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Michelle Russell and I am the President of the Kansas Pet Professionals. I am also a Professional Breeder in good standing with the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the USDA, where I am licensed and regulated. I serve on several other animal related boards within our industry. I have had the privilege of being one of the breeders selected to participate in the writing of the standards of Purdue University's Canine Care Certified program. I also currently serve on The Breeders Leadership Council, and the Canine Care board of Pet Advocacy (formerly known as PIJAC).

Today I am voicing my concerns with opening the Kansas Pet Animal Act for House Bill 2437. I do not believe the requested changes by the Department of Agriculture are warranted. Last year the Department presented a bill to move the program out of the Division of Animal Health and thankfully that bill died in committee. The program then went on to receive a state General Fund enhancement that provided the program, staff salary increases and ability to add positions into the program. A bill presented this year was not expected or warranted. With the added funding, the Department should consider growth of the program and not open a bill for minute changes and additions. We should only open the act to add beneficial language. I believe this bill does not provide that.

Kansas is one of the most highly regulated states across the country. The Kansas Department of Agriculture is constantly trying to change or add increased regulation, license fees and no contact fees for our Licensees through statutes, rules, and regulations, but continues to look the other way for the unlicensed and pets that cross Kansas borders illegally. This results in some businesses feeling as though they are operating in a hostile environment, which our members feel is already over regulated. On

behalf of the Kansas Pet Professionals I would ask you if there could be a more effective avenue of holding the Department of Agriculture accountable through more transparency to the concerns of the department and Licensee?

While we oppose this Bill as written, we ask that you take our requested amendments into consideration should this bill move forward. Until these amendments are discussed and considered, Kansas Pet Professionals will NOT be in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Michelle Russell