

Fact Sheet

Support SB 117/118, the "Puppy Protection Act."

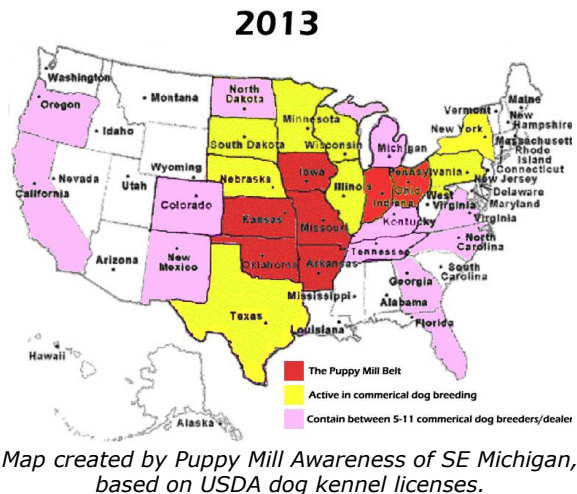
In 2012 authorities removed over 350 dogs from a commercial breeding kennel in Allegan County, Mi that had spiraled out of control. The mother dog below is shown nursing her puppies under her layers of matted feces. The animals were found soaked in urine, with severe dental problems and fleas. Stronger laws and oversight could have prevented this facility from declining to this condition, and could have prevented the significant expenses incurred by local agencies, including the expense of investigation, evidence gathering, animal care and court proceedings.



The Puppy Protection Act (SB 117-118) is legislation to protect dogs in large-scale breeding facilities. This legislation would establish long-overdue guidelines for housing, sanitary conditions, enclosure space, exercise, and veterinary care of dogs used by large-scale breeders in Michigan. It would also place an upper limit on the number of intact breeding dogs that may be housed in breeding facilities, to prevent our state from becoming a haven for inhumane puppy mills. The Puppy Protection Act was launched by Michigan Humane Society and is supported by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Michigan Veterinary Medical Association, and the Michigan Association of Animal Control Officers.

Stop puppy mills from coming to Michigan:

While Michigan is not known as a big "puppy mill" state, with only three USDA-licensed commercial breeders and 21 county-licensed breeders who report owning more than 50 dogs, the Allegan County case underscores the fact that puppy mills exist here, and that current laws are insufficient to manage them. Moreover, we are very close to the "Puppy Mill Belt," sharing borders with states that have more than 120 commercial breeders. The Puppy Protection Act will help ensure that the largest, most problematic breeding operations do not migrate to Michigan from states that are implementing stronger regulations.



Protect animals in unlicensed large-scale breeding facilities: Some large-scale kennel operators have moved to Michigan counties with no animal control and with under-staffed law enforcement agencies, thereby avoiding inspections and enforcement. The Puppy Protection Act will close that loophole and won't leave one county to hide in!



Say No to Inhumane Commercial Breeding Conditions: The bulldog below (left) lives in a barrel on wire floors at a USDA licensed facility in Branch County. Another dog at the same facility has untreated inflammations in his eyes. (Photo Credit: 2010 USDA)



Under the Puppy Protection Act, this kennel would need to make some changes: (1) reduce the number of intact breeding dogs from 85 to 50, (2) provide solid cage floors, (3) provide exercise, (4) seek veterinary care, (5) provide rest between breeding cycles, and (6) have unstacked cages.

Limit the number of animals: As evidenced by the Allegan County case, the potential for neglect and inadequate care increases significantly when the number of breeding animals becomes unmanageable. A limit on the number of breeding animals would prevent the introduction of overcrowded, large-scale breeding operations into Michigan as they become more restricted in other states. Four states (VA, LA, OR and WA) currently have caps limiting the number of intact breeding dogs that can be kept at one facility.



Typical commercial kennel
Photo Credit: 2012 Noble County (Indiana) Zoning Dept.

Protect Consumers: Sick puppies sold by puppy mills typically can cost their new owners hundreds or even thousands of dollars in veterinary care, if they live long enough to be sold. The lack of proper health screening and careless breeding at puppy mills often results in a prevalence of inherited health issues that trickle down to the unborn puppies. Some owners get rid of dogs because of bad behavior, not understanding the real causes behind the behavior, causing more animals to flood shelters that are already filled to capacity.

State action is needed: 35 states have laws to license or regulate dog and cat breeders. In 2009, a Michigan kennel study showed that approximately 230 licensed kennels would fall under this new law. In 2012 a Metro Detroit area Classified Ads Study showed most internet sellers did not have a county kennel license which means no animal welfare inspections. Large scale commercial breeding operations should be licensed and monitored just like other legitimate small businesses in the state.

Please support SB 117/118 to require the humane treatment of dogs in Michigan breeding facilities!

