

漁農處的信頭

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電話 TEL NO.: 2733 2155

電報掛號 Cable Address: AGFISH HONG KONG

5 July 1999

圖文傳真 Fax. No.: 2311 3731

Miss Leung Siu-kum
Clerk to Subcommittee
Legislative Council
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Leung,

**Subcommittee on
Resolution under section 3 of the
Dogs and Cats Ordinance (Cap 167) and
Dogs and Cats (Amendment) Ordinance 1997 (97 Of 1997)
(Commencement) Notice 1999**

Meeting on 6 July 1999

I refer to your letter on the proposed Dangerous Dogs Regulation addressed to Mr Stephen Ip, SES enclosing the submissions made by Mr Sanderson and Mr Etches. Both submissions raised concerns about the proposed control for “large dog” and considered the proposed control on “fighting dog” and “known dangerous dog” reasonable and acceptable.

Specifically, Mr Etches is of the view that it is arbitrary to designate 20kg dogs as large dogs and to suggest that large dogs are more dangerous. Mr Sanderson shares that view but he also mistook that large dogs are required to be muzzled in all public places. They further opine that this “large dog” proposal fosters belief that dogs are something to fear; and there is no obvious need to categorise dogs whether on breed or on size as potentially dangerous.

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The 20kg limit for “large dogs” was established after reviewing statistics on the breeds of dogs responsible for dog bites in Hong Kong as well as information on the weight of these breeds. From this review it was apparent that large dogs were responsible for the vast majority of serious bite wounds. We recognise that not all large dogs are dangerous, but large dogs are generally more powerful than small dogs. If children are bitten by large dog, the wounds are more likely to be in the region of the face and neck, which could lead to permanent disfigurement.

The proposed controls on large dogs aim at preventing this from happening. “Large dog” is required to be fitted with a muzzle in addition to leashing, only in indoor public places, such as lift, passageway or lobby of a housing estate. In outdoor public places, the only requirement is for the dog to be held securely on a leash no longer than 2 metres in length.

The muzzling requirement for “large dog” in indoor public places has been included to provide extra security for residents who sometimes have to share confined spaces with dogs. In most cases, “large dog” will only need to wear a muzzle for the brief period of time when moving from their owner’s residence through the common parts of the building to outside.

The Administration recognises the merits of training and is prepared to grant exemptions under section 17 of the main Ordinance to trained dogs if they can demonstrate through examination that they will remain under control in a range of standard day-to-day live situations. The examination will require the dog to demonstrate no more than a causal interest to other dogs in confined space; capable of stay and walking off leash, being sent off, stopped, and recalled. They should also be capable of walking through a crowd without showing signs of fear or aggression. We anticipate that the examinations will be held twice a year either as an independent event or in conjunction with major dog events, such as dog show. Exempted dogs will be given special collar tags to distinguish them from other dogs. Their exemption status will also be entered in their microchip licensing records.

The controls placed on large dogs have been balanced to take into account public safety as well as animal welfare considerations. They are not onerous for owners or to their dogs.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(LIU Kwel-kin)
for Director of Agriculture and Fisheries

c.c. SES (Attn: Miss Dora FU)