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23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2000

Subcommittee on Dangerous Dogs Regulation  
Legislative Council  
8 Jackson Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

Dear,

The SPCA is extremely concerned that the Dangerous Dog Regulation is in grave danger of either being thrown out or passed in a version that is so totally watered down as to render it virtually pointless, especially with reference to Category 1 (Control of Fighting Dogs) and Category 2 (Control of Known Dangerous Dogs).

The SPCA once again urges members of the Sub-committee to support Category 1 & 2 as originally proposed. This is both in the interests of public safety to prevent serious injury or death caused by animals bred to fight and which have no place as family pets, especially in the confined environment of Hong Kong, as well as a means of preventing illegal dog fighting which is carried out for profit by unscrupulous owners and which results in great suffering to the dogs themselves.

At the last meeting of the Sub-committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1999, the SPCA noted that some members had reservations about the requirement in the proposed legislation to neuter fighting dogs and known dangerous dogs. To make the legislation meaningful, mandatory neutering of these animals must be included.

Neutering is a safe, relatively simple procedure, carried out under a general anaesthetic. The recovery time is short and the animal suffers no undesirable side effects. In fact the SPCA recommends neutering to owners of all dogs, not only to prevent unwanted litters which contributes significantly to the stray problem but also because neutering has positive health benefits, including reducing the risk of certain types of cancer and reducing behavioural problems. However for the purposes of the Dangerous Dogs Regulation there is a large and conclusive body of evidence that shows neutering markedly reduces aggression, making the dog less likely to attack or bite.

Neutering is also an essential part of the proposed legislation if fighting dogs are to be phased out of Hong Kong. If neutering is rejected, fighting dogs will continue to be bred and pose a risk to their owners, family members and friends as well as to the public at large,. In this case the legislation will have failed dismally to address public safety, not to mention the fact that illegal gambling activities will continue to be associated with the use of these dogs.

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Legislation to protect the public from attack by fighting dogs and known dangerous dogs has been enacted in a number of countries. Whilst there are some variations, neutering of these animals is seen to be an essential part of effective legislation and it would be ludicrous if this was not included in legislation here.

I respectfully urge members of the Sub-committee to take onboard the expert opinion of those who have previously made representation, including the views of members of the veterinary profession which were expressed through the SPCA, the Hong Kong Veterinary Association and AFD, and to support the proposals as they pertain to Category 1 and 2 including compulsory neutering.

The SPCA would like to reiterate its total support of Category 1 & 2, and if nothing else these should be passed without delay. To do otherwise is to end up with legislation that fails to adequately ensure public safety with potentially lethal consequences.

Yours sincerely,

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Deputy Executive Director

CS/sp