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7<sup>th</sup> January, 2000

Dr. Hon Tang Sui-tong JP  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Dangerous Dogs Regulation  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
3/F., Citibank Tower  
3 Garden Road  
Hong Kong

Dear Dr. Tang,

Representatives of the SPCA have been closely involved in the discussions held over the past two years on the proposed Dangerous Dogs Regulation and have made frequent submissions and recommendations to the Subcommittee, along with other concerned animal welfare groups and individuals.

Consequently the SPCA was extremely surprised and disappointed at the apparent change in the focus of the discussions at the last Subcommittee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1999. The questionnaire sent out to the Subcommittee following that meeting, further indicated that the whole point of the legislation is in danger of being missed totally.

The legislation has been proposed by the Administration with the declared aim of reducing the number of dog bites, ensuring public safety and to make members of the public feel less threatened in the presence of larger dogs in indoor and outdoor public places.

With these aims in mind, most concerned animal welfare groups and individuals have been wholly supportive of the introduction of the strict controls proposed for "Fighting Breeds" and "Known Dangerous Dogs". Most of the debate has therefore focused on the "Large Dogs" category and the arbitrary 20 kg limit. It was therefore very surprising that at the last Subcommittee meeting, the "Large Dogs" category was barely mentioned and instead, the focus of discussion was directed at the "Fighting Dogs" category, with members expressing a variety of views, including not supporting the ban on the import of Fighting Breeds, not supporting the proposal that all Fighting Breeds must be neutered and most worrying of all, that perhaps "Fighting Breeds" could simply be included in the "Large Dogs" category and subject to the same restrictions.

The questionnaire subsequently distributed to members of the Subcommittee appears to suggest that member may be considering a greatly watered-down version of the legislation as it applies to "Fighting Breeds" and "Known Dangerous Dogs" as well as the possibility that members may support measures to enforce the leashing of ALL dogs, large and small, in all indoor and outdoor public places.

The SPCA is concerned that the Subcommittee, in an effort to bring to a conclusion legislation that has been outstanding for such a long time, may support legislation that is greatly distant from what the Administration, the SPCA and many other local animal welfare organisations believes is appropriate and which ultimately will not serve the purpose for which it was originally intended.

Members of the Subcommittee must by now be very well aware of the views and recommendations made by concerned groups and individuals and I will not re-iterate them yet again. However the SPCA urges the members of the Subcommittee to re-focus their efforts on legislation that will genuinely protect the public, by addressing the real issues of inherently aggressive dogs and irresponsible owners. Ignoring the very real dangers posed by Fighting Breeds, Known Dangerous Dogs and passing half-hearted measures that simply penalise all dog owners is irresponsible and potentially lethal.

The SPCA would welcome the opportunity to make further representation in the hope that this matter can be brought to a speedy and satisfactory conclusion.

Yours sincerely,

Cynthia Smillie  
Deputy Executive Director

CS/sp