



Re: Proposed Amendments to Animal Trader Regulations (Cap 139B)

Christie Wong

to:

lkllam

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From: Christie Wong

To:

Dear Liza Lam,

I am a Hong Kong citizen currently studying at University of Sydney, majoring in environmental sciences that includes zoology and marine biology. Having had extensive work experiences in animal related jobs in Hong Kong (work experience as vet nurse at various vet hospitals: SPCA, CWB Animal Hospital, as long time volunteer and fundraiser for various dog rescue organizations: HKDR, SPCAHK, SAA), Africa (Worked at a wildlife sanctuary in Namibia and joined a University of Hong Kong Eco-leader trip to Madagascar) and Australia (Involved with various animal welfare organizations and rescue groups), I would like to add some comments in response to the Proposed Amendments to Animal Trader Regulations (Cap 139B).

Firstly, I am against animal trading. Although I appreciate the new AFCD website changes and advertisements that is trying to educate the public about being responsible pet owners. However, on the website where it writes "[We recommend that you buy a dog from a pet shop or a breeder* who has obtained an animal trader licence issued by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department \(AFCD\). Never buy dogs from unknown sources.](#)" may allow some people to think it is okay to buy a pet from non-licensed shops as it is not a requirement and there is obvious lacking in regulation of these non-licensed shops. It is likely that many people will continue to treat pets as mere commodities and exploit them with this view and the lack of rigorous regulations.

Many cities have introduced Trap-Neuter-Return strategies towards feral animal population. It is one of the most cited methods in scientific journals as the most humane and effective method of animal control. Furthermore, some cities have completely prohibited the sale of animals in pet shops. In a small and crowded city like Hong Kong, the government should focus on re-homing abandoned or homeless animals first, rather than introducing new licensing schemes. "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated", a quote attributed to Mahatma Gandhi is relevant in this context, as Hong Kong, a predominantly Westernized city, should strive to be the leader in advocating for animal welfare, which will bring further positive effects to the city of Hong Kong as others see our progress.

I believe that good education is paramount for this moral progress and to combat the problems of animal abandonment, animal abuse and over population of strays, the government must require any

prospective pet owners to undertake pet care and responsibility courses and require that all prospective pet owners obtain a licence. The education package should have other follow up (possibly free of charge) courses/ monthly events such as dog training skills, dog etiquette classes and dog socializing sessions where large amounts of people can join to learn and to minimize the risk of problem behaviors in animals, which are predominantly caused by the lack of animal care knowledge on the owner's part. Furthermore, the licence will mean that it will be easy to track stray or abandoned animals to their owners. Depending on the case, the abandonment of the animal by the owner may incur a heavy fee.

Owning pets are expensive and costs will last throughout the lifetime of the animal. Owners have a responsibility to provide utmost care and treatment for the rest of the animal's life, including when it is sick. During my work experiences as a veterinary nurse and as volunteers at dog rescue centers such as SPCA, HKDR, SAA and various other animal hospitals, it was all too often a scene when owners come into the clinic asking to put down their animal because vet fees are too expensive for them to handle financially. If prospective owners are not willing to pay for licence fees because it is too expensive, then there is a high chance that they will not take care of the animal well.

In the proposal section that includes a one-off permit for genuine pet owners to sell their animals, I would like to add that owners of animals who genuinely love animals and their companion animals would not breed their loved ones and sell them to anonymous people who's temperament and lifestyle are unknown to the 'genuine' owner, in the same way that we would not sell our daughter's or son's babies to make a living. If breeding of pets is to take place, then I propose that only one permit during the person's entire lifetime can be obtained.

Thank you for your time and patience and I hope you will help the voiceless animals by being their voice and amending the law and proposals to improve their welfare as best as you and your team can.

Kindest regards,
Christie Wong