

The Cobb County commission proposed changes to the county code that could affect dog owners, breeders, and working dog owners. The changes could:

1) FORCE breeders to conduct all sales only on the premises where dogs were bred and reared, which would...

- Pressure breeders to open their private homes up and put them at risk of assault, theft and other crimes

2) FORCE dogs to be kept on leashes no longer than 10 feet in park facilities unless in designated fenced off-leash area, which would...

- Restrict the ability of dogs to engage in therapy work, search and rescue work, livestock guarding and herding, and truffle and mushroom hunting
- Prevent the exhibition of sanctioned dog shows or dog sporting shows

HELP BY:

- Attending the public hearing and vote on February 11, 2020, at 9:00 am
- Contacting the Chairman of the County Commission and your County Commissioner

Mike Boyce, Commission
Chairman
(770) 528-3305
mike.boyce@cobbcounty.org

**SHARING with animal
owners and lovers in
Cobb County, Georgia!**

good dog



February 6, 2020

Dear Commissioner,

Please accept this letter as our request to vote no to any and all overreaching proposed animal code changes, including the definition of “Private Breeder” and the ten-foot leash proposal.

We started Good Dog because of our own struggles (and the struggles that our friends and family have had) to find a dog in a responsible way. Good Dog is an organization on a mission to build a better world for our dogs and the people who love them by working to transform the system through public education and support for vetted, responsible breeders. Our community is committed to creating a movement that educates the public so that they understand why it is so important to get their dog from a responsible source, how to identify responsible sources and avoid bad ones, and why, if we want to decrease dog abandonment in shelters and rescues and have healthier dogs, it is critical that we support and recognize only responsible and ethical dog sources.

Good Dog’s goal is to use technology as a force for good in the dog world – to (i) educate the public, (ii) add transparency and accountability, (iii) empower, support, and advocate for responsible breeders, all to push out the bad sources and succeed in the Good Dog mission to help build a better world for our dogs and the people who love them. In that pursuit, we have a Screening and Standards team led by Judi Stella, a PhD with years of experience specializing in animal welfare. Judi has sought out and worked with some of the top academics and practitioners in the canine field to develop our community standards, which are grounded in evidence-based research and backed by science. All of the Good Breeders in our community must have passed our screening (which includes a required level of health testing and ethical breeding practices for breeding dogs and puppies) and comply with our community standards.

Because we are so committed to pushing out the bad sources in the dog world, we applaud your attempt to pass the proposed animal code changes, because we know it is your intention to make the world better for our dogs. However, we believe these code changes are overreaching and will have a negative effect on the dog breeders and owners making responsible choices. We fear that these proposed animal code changes will push out the good sources we so desperately need in order to truly make the world a better place for our dogs. Good Dog’s certified Good Breeders have proven themselves as responsible and ethical sources, who invest much more money in their breeding programs, including in the rigorous health testing of their breeding dogs and litters, than they will ever recoup, raise their litters in their own homes with their family and pets, stand behind their dogs for life (and vow to take their dogs back from owners if the situation ever requires it), and breed to produce healthy, socialized dogs. If these proposed animal code changes are approved, those certified Good Breeders could be pushed out and find it much more difficult to operate, making it easier for disreputable sources, such as unethical puppy producers, to continue misleading the public and putting dog’s lives at risk.

A dog breeder should have the right to decide what constitutes a reasonable and safe place to sell their responsibly bred dogs. A responsible breeder often breeds and raises their dogs in their own home, because their dogs are akin to their family. By forcing responsible breeders to open up their private homes to anyone claiming to want to meet or purchase a dog, breeders will face higher risk of assault, theft, and other crimes. This is especially worrisome given that breeders are often women, who we know are already more susceptible to these types of crimes.

And even more troubling is the anti-breeder sentiment that has spread and been unfairly aimed at responsible breeders. Responsible breeders are often blamed by society for dog abandonment, and we have seen firsthand the threats of, and actual acts of, violence against these breeders from the public.

Forcing responsible breeders to open up their homes to the public exposes them to real physical harm that they will not be able to protect themselves from. We firmly believe, through our own experience, that responsible breeders truly know what is best for their dogs, and they should be allowed to prioritize their safety and their dogs' wellbeing.

Additionally, leash laws, such as those being proposed, would restrict the ability of dogs to engage in therapy work, search and rescue work, livestock guarding and herding, and truffle and mushroom hunting, among other things. This could have disastrous effects not only on people's livelihoods, but could also prevent trained dogs from performing work that is vital to our society.

We also welcome the opportunity to discuss with you the underlying problems these proposed changes are seeking to address. We believe, by working together as a united force, we can use evidence-based science and technology to bring meaningful change and accountability to the dog world, which we think it is your intent to do. These proposed animal code changes make it more difficult for the good and reputable sources who are actually improving the dog world to continue to do so, instead of prohibiting truly harmful activities that endanger the dog world and our dogs' lives. We believe that in order to make real, meaningful change, the animal code changes must directly address the truly problematic activities that put our dogs' lives in danger, and must avoid overreaching regulations that do more harm than good by effectively pushing out responsible dog breeders and owners.

We thank you so much for your time in reading this letter and we hope that our voice is heard on behalf of our community, which includes thousands of responsible dog breeders, shelters, rescues, and owners. We do not believe there is any evidence to corroborate that these code changes would have any effects other than threatening the existence of the responsible sources that the dog world so desperately needs. We welcome the opportunity to refute any information presented in support of these proposed animal code changes and engage in discussions about how to solve the very real problems that exist in the dog world.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration and for striving to give our dogs the world they deserve. We look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Catherine Matloub, Esq.
Head of Partnerships and Legal Affairs, Good Dog

Monica DeBosscher, Esq.
Director of Partnerships and Legal Affairs, Good Dog