

Bill 27

Province House  
1726 Hollis Street  
Halifax, N.S. B3J 2Y3

Re: Proposed Amendments to the Nova Scotia Animal Protection Act – Bill 27

Dear Law Amendment Committee,

I am a resident of Nova Scotia and have lived in Nova Scotia most of my life. I am also a dog owner of a breed that has a docked tail. I love me dogs and would do anything for them. I am a responsible educated individual and feel I understand my rights as a residence of Nova Scotia. I have been following the Proposed Amendment to the Nova Scotia Animal Protection Act and I am appalled that the Liberal government did not include all parties at the table when developing this legislation. Whether we own a purebred dog or a mixed bred or a cat we should all have representation as stakeholders, to a law that will impact us all. I am sure you would agree.

I have read the legislation and would like to provide input:

1. The use of the word “Custodian” versus “Owner”:

The definition of “Custodian” includes six options as descriptions of custodian. The option that is most concerning is c) any person who has possession of the animal. If a cat takes up residences in my barn or under my porch and it's my neighbor's cat – under the change to the law I am now response for the cat. The inspector is no longer required to find the true owner in the legislation and can change the individual that has the cat under their porch. This could happen to anyone. This change will strip owners of the rights and responsibility that comes with ownership. An individual could be wrongfully accused. I recommend that the word “Custodian” be replaced with Owner”.

2. Proposed Section 20 (2) [Current act Section 23(8bc)]: In the current act, this section falls under the heading “When an animal is found in distress”.

In the proposed bill, this heading has been removed entirely. Doing so removals all need for probable cause for an animal being in distress. Inspectors will be able to go onto private property without probable cause, require dog owners to open their doors and present any animal from within the home for inspection at any time. Without the heading of "When animal is found in distress," it provides fewer rights as a dog owner then non-dog owning citizens. I recommend that “when an animal is found in distress” be returned to the amended legislation.

3. Proposed Section 20(8): New.

This section indicates (with no mention of needing probable cause of an animal being in distress) that an inspector may enter on or pass over any land or water enclosed or not, without liability and without the owner's right to object. For private property owners, this section is very concerning. This section could be taken to mean that an inspector can be on a resident's private property without the requirement of needing probable cause. This doesn't take into account biosecurity issues one could have, with an inspector crossing over a chicken farm then entering a kennel. Very concerning and you should be concerned as well.

4. Proposed Section 27(1): No person shall preform, or permit to be performed, cosmetic surgery on an animal unless it is an accepted activity under Section 28. (Including tail docking, debarking, dewclaw removal to name a few.

This amendment puts owners of a dog with a docked tail at risk. If we purchased a puppy from a province or state that believes these practices are acceptable we are at risk of being charged under this law. Preventing an individual from sourcing a companion from another province should be there right until the chart of rights and freedoms. I would suggest the following changes to the law. No person shall have cosmetic surgery preform by anyone other than a certificated veterinary. This will prevent backyard breeders from causing pain yet allow responsible breeders if they so wish to have surgery performed properly by a veterinary. It will also allow individuals that would like to purchase a breed with a docked tail to do so without going to jail for 6 months.

I am hopeful that all government representatives take the time to seriously review the proposed bill and realize the personal implications that will have on them if they are a companion animal owner. As the bill is written I vote NO.

Sincerely,  
Christine Remme  
Residence of Mount Denson, Nova Scotia