

September 22, 2006

Mayor Jerry Abramson

Metro Hall / 4th Floor

527 W. Jefferson Street

Louisville, KY 40202

RE: Proposed Dog Ordinance

Dear Mayor Abramson:

As Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, I have been contacted by a number of persons in the Louisville Metro Area who believe a proposed ordinance currently under discussion by the Louisville Metro Council will unfairly jeopardize their dogs, themselves, and their lawful activities involving hunting, training, raising or selling their sporting dogs.

On behalf of the holders of more than one million Kentucky hunting and fishing licenses, and specifically the nearly 65,000 in Jefferson County, I am asking you to ensure that any ordinance you support does not hinder their longtime pursuits.

Hunting with dogs, and training those dogs, is not only legal, it is a treasured part of Kentucky's rich heritage. Many Kentucky sportsmen and sportswomen passionately and lawfully pursue rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, opossums, ducks, geese, quail, woodcock, turkey and more with well-trained and highly-skilled dogs.

Portions of your proposed ordinance alarm me. I am concerned that it inadvertently ensnares many hunters and their activities. For instance, avid rabbit hunters will often keep far more than five beagles, bird hunters more than five pointers and setters, and raccoon hunters more than five hounds. This has been the norm for longer than any of our lifetimes.

These dogs, while in training or in the lawful pursuit of game, work without leads or restraints. To some, these dogs may appear out of control. They may have unplanned contact with other animals or people. They pursue, contact, or retrieve wounded animals that might resist. Clearly, these highly likely hunting and training scenarios set up unacceptable possibilities of violating portions of the proposed ordinance.

The proposed ordinance would make it illegal to offer a puppy as part of the program at a conservation organization's fund raiser. This has been standard practice for decades across the country. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised for wildlife conservation nationwide by Ducks Unlimited, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Trout Unlimited, Quail Unlimited, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and others who auction or raffle retriever, beagle, or setter puppies.

The proposed ordinance contains other issues of concern as well. I hope you will seriously consider a more narrow approach to addressing Jefferson County's dog issues. Kentucky's sportsmen and sportswomen who train and hunt with sporting dogs simply should not be faced with a patchwork of differing restrictions across the state created by multiple local ordinances.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me if I can help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Jonathan Gasset". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J" and "G".

Dr. Jonathan Gasset

Commissioner

JWG/MM/njm