

L.A. Unleashed

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West Hollywood set to ban retail sales of dogs and cats

February 16, 2010 | 6:49 pm



The West Hollywood City Council is looking to put a stop to sales of dogs and cats in pet stores. If the ordinance prohibiting the sale of dogs and cats in companion animal stores is approved in a Tuesday night vote, as is widely expected, West Hollywood would be among the first cities in the nation to prohibit most retail sales of puppies and kittens. South Lake Tahoe did just that in 2009, according to our sister blog L.A. Now.

The new ordinance, which was unanimously approved at its first reading a few weeks ago, is just the latest piece of animal welfare legislation the city has ushered in. In 2003, West Hollywood became the first city in the country to outlaw cat declawing. (Several other California cities, including Santa Monica, followed suit in 2009.)

The ordinance is aimed at curtailing puppy mills and addressing the inhumane conditions endured by animals in the puppy mill industry, which relies heavily on sales through retail pet stores for its profits, officials said in a statement.

Puppy mills are large-scale commercial breeding facilities that mass-produce puppies for sale in pet stores, online and directly to the public. Documented problems of puppy mills include overbreeding, inbreeding, veterinary care that doesn't meet the same standards as other breeders, relatively poor quality of food and shelter, lack of human socialization and overcrowded cages. Dogs bred in puppy mills are more likely to have behavior and/or health problems. Although kitten mills are not as common as puppy mills, similar problems are reported.

"This ordinance represents an important step toward ridding our nation of the cruelty of puppy mills and other commercial assembly-line animal breeders," West Hollywood Councilmember Jeffrey Prang said in a statement. "The ordinance not only contributes to the fight against animal cruelty, it also recognizes the enormous cost of pet overpopulation in our society, both fiscal and humanitarian impacts. I urge those seeking pet companionship to consider adoption from municipal shelters and other nonprofit rescue agencies."

If approved, West Hollywood's ordinance would go into effect March 19. No businesses would be immediately affected, Prang told L.A. Now, since no pet stores within West Hollywood's city limits currently sell puppies and kittens.

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 -- Gerrick D. Kennedy (Follow me on Twitter @GerrickKennedy)

Photo: Patrons visit with puppies at Melrose Avenue pet store Orange Bone, which sells only rescued puppies rather than those obtained from puppy mills. Credit: Nancy Pastor / For The Times

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Oh my God, where oh where will all the movie stars get their designer dogs from now??? You know if they wouldn't make these "mutts" so popular the pet stores would have nothing to sell!

Posted by: Cathie | February 17, 2010 at 06:12 AM

As usual, LA is way ahead of the rest of the country. This is legislation that will actually make a difference.

Posted by: Cate | February 17, 2010 at 08:53 AM

Where??? in animal shelters! There are so many cute ones there!!!

Posted by: Ryan | February 22, 2010 at 11:37 AM

RE: Animal lovers calendar: weekends of March 27-28 and beyond | comment by Bandit

RE: Man arrested for drunkenness after giving mouth-to-mouth to roadkill | comment by Paul D. Lawrence

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