



Dear Members of the Subcommittee,

We, Animals Asia Foundation, strongly support the immediate enactment of the amendments to Cap139b without further delay as the continued problem of overpopulation of dogs in Hong Kong and unregulated breeding is seriously compromising the welfare of dogs in our territory.

The loophole in the current law, has created serious problems with the regulation of the trade and breeding of dogs (which is already legal - legality is not the issue) and has led to serious cases of neglect, cruelty and abandonment, by some unscrupulous traders who operate under the guise of being private pet owners.

To be clear, Animals Asia does not condone breeding. We would like to see an end to the trade in dogs as commodities and the promotion of adoption of many of the wonderful dogs languishing in the territories full to bursting shelters. However, despite everyone's educational efforts, some will continue to want to acquire specific breed dogs through purchase and as a result there is need to regulate the dog breeding trade through legislation.

Commercial breeders have been exploiting not only the dogs, but the legal loophole to make profit, with as little expenditure on their part for the care, health and welfare of their 'products'. Hobby breeders should not be able to make quick and easy money, or any money at all in fact from the trade in sentient, living creatures, but as we have to be realistic – the amendments to Cap139b are a step in the right direction

to offer breeding animals SOME level of basic care, setting benchmark minimum standards and licensing conditions, that must be adhered to, in line with similar laws in other countries.

The concerns by some about the Animal Welfare Organisation exemption, to collect fees for adopted dogs and effectively requiring them to register with AFCD and other government bodies, is also we believe an added bonus of the new amendments. NGO's and individuals carrying out abandoned animal rescue, rehoming and education work, should also be monitored, especially in regards to use of 'donations' and public funds for their work.

Registration as a society for an individual, is an easy requirement and as such with the amendments to Cap 139b we are pleased to see it as a requirement for individuals conducting animal 'rehoming' and 'education' work, amongst other requirements. Transparency with anyone doing welfare work is paramount and should be a point of pride of those working in this field! If you are genuinely doing good work, seeking medical advice from registered vets for the animals under your care, providing enough for their mental, physical and emotional needs and finding them good homes, there should not be an issue with registering yourself as doing so! We do not see this AWO exemption as an issue for those concerned with the genuine health, welfare, care and rehoming of abandoned animals.

We implore you, the subcommittee, to not be waylaid by the ill-informed arguments of those opposed to the amendments. We also sincerely hope that in the near future, the regulation of trade of other species such as cats, reptiles, turtles and other common types of pets,

can be addressed so that other species are also afforded better protection and welfare, do not continue to suffer exploitation. Continued education of the public is also key.

A failure to pass the amendments proposed will condemn dogs currently in the pet trade and those in the future, to suffer further without legal protection.

Thank you.