



Irish Wolfhound Club of America, Inc.

August 17, 2008

Dennis Sprung
President and CEO,
American Kennel Club;

Walter Bebout
Chairman,
AKC Government Relations Department;

Ronald Menaker
Chairman, AKC Board of Directors;

David Merriam
Vice-Chairman, AKC Board of Directors

Members of the AKC Board of Directors

Subject: AKC Position on California AB 1634

Dear Mr. Sprung, Mr. Bebout, Mr. Menaker, Mr. Merriam, and members of the AKC Board of Directors;

We, the Legislative Committee of the Irish Wolfhound Club of America (IWCA), on behalf of the IWCA membership, request the AKC seriously reconsider its neutral position on California's proposed AB 1634 for the following reasons:

1. AB 1634 will still make it illegal to own an intact animal once that animal is cited three times (twice for cats) for any other infraction of California animal laws. Nearly all of these laws have absolutely no relation to the animal's reproductive status.
2. Because mandatory spaying or castrating is superimposed on existing penalties for animals at-large, or other infractions of animal law, AB 1634 discriminates against intact animals as opposed to castrated animals and, as such, imposes double jeopardy on intact animals.
3. It would appear disingenuous of the AKC to insist that the current version of AB 1634 (11th amendment) is solely about responsible owners. It fails to address a large category of violations of animal law (e.g.: dogs and cats at-large following or during the earthquakes, wildfires, and flash floods which are so frequent in California) that are beyond an owner's control. Similarly, theft of animals, car accidents, or house fires (all of which very often involve animals at-large) are also beyond the owner's control. Yet, even one such incident could result in two or three citations that are not only actionable per se, but also include the requirement to spay or castrate the animal.
4. The exemption of out-of-state dogs from the constraints of AB 1634 is irrelevant. California dogs provide the great majority of entries in California shows. If many or most of their dogs are subject to mandatory spaying or castrating, it should be expected that the California fanciers who organize, staff, and sponsor these shows would shift their focus out of California.
5. Since there are already penalties in place which address animals at-large, dangerous animals, unlicensed animals, pets over limit, and other violations of existing law, it would seem superfluous for the AKC to insist that opposing AB 1634 is tantamount to defending dog and cat owners who repeatedly break the law. AB 1634 adds nothing to that judicial mix except a serious move towards full-scale mandatory spaying and castrating of all dogs and cats in the state.

6. Given that compliance with pet licensing laws are often ignored and it is still estimated that over 75 percent of all owned dogs and cats are already spayed or castrated, it should be evident that requiring even more animals to be spayed or castrated will not affect licensing at all.

7. Finally, if, as the AKC has stated in two recent legislative alerts, the AKC does not think AB 1634 is necessary or that it can even be effective in addressing any animal control issues, then amendment 11 is not germane to their decision because it does not alter the basic intent and premise of the bill. Therefore, it would seem appropriate that the AKC reiterate and reinforce its previously well-considered position of opposing AB 1634. The AKC and its membership have nothing to gain from the enactment of AB 1634. However, the AKC and its membership have much to lose. As such, it is requested that the AKC take all possible measures to support their membership's, and all pet owners', vested interests (the most basic of which is the right to actually function autonomously as the pet's owner) by rescinding its 'Neutral' position and re-confirming its position to 'Oppose' AB 1634.

Respectfully submitted,

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IWCA Legislative Committee

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