



Hills Bridge Beagles



Testimony HB 1551 – Regulation of Dog Breeders

Economic Matters Committee

Position: OPPOSE

Good afternoon, Chairman Valderrama, Vice-Chair and Honorable Committee Members

My name is Margaret Crane. I am the Joint Master of the Hills Bridge Beagles, a beagling foot pack that hunts in all the Southern Maryland Counties. The Hills Bridge Beagles (HBB) are recognized foot pack by the National Beagle Club, the AKC parent club of Beagle breed. Beagling is a tracking sport not a killing sport. The HBB was formed more than 40 years ago. The pack has between 60-80 followers that come out one or more times in any given season. Our followers range from the very young to the young at heart. Beagling gives people who might not otherwise have the opportunity, a chance to get out in the natural areas, farms and countryside to enjoy all the beauty Southern Maryland has to offer.

As a threshold matter, the HBB breed between 1 to 2 litters per year. Many of the puppies go to other nationally recognized packs but a few of the puppies each year go to families looking for a dog that will be highly trainable. Because my beagles have been selectively bred for decades for traits like biddability and intelligence, they are very trainable and make wonderful companions.

As noted above, the pack is recognized by the National Beagle Club, which maintains a stud book for the packs, but my beagles are also registered with the American Kennel Club (AKC). Maintaining registration with the AKC is expensive. Dual registrations are maintained for all beagles even though most of the beagles in the kennel will never be bred. Like the National Beagle Club, the AKC maintains pedigree records for all registered dogs. What's being proposed is a third registration which is absurd.

Creating a registration system in the State of Maryland would be burdensome for Maryland breeders, provide no benefit to breeders or prospective pet owners and make owning a purebred puppy unaffordable for young families that would really benefit from pet ownership. To be absolutely clear, there is no value add in what's being proposed here, this is **nothing more than a tax placed on breeders with the sole purpose of trying to di-incentivize breeding and/or purebred dog ownership.**

AKC breeders are not the problem. The mixed breeds that predominate in the shelters are the result of irresponsible pet owners who don't spay or neuter their pets and who won't register or comply with the requirements of this proposed program. **This program is a tax on responsible breeders to pay for the bad acts of irresponsible breeders.** Based on the forgoing, I would respectfully request you vote no on HB 1551.

If you're interested in learning more about Beagling you can see the HBB on Outdoors Maryland by using the following link <https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-394-23hx3m9f> . This video won an Emmy and was voted Maryland's Favorite dog video.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony before this honorable committee.

Margaret Crane