



March 17, 2021

Senator Steve Southerland  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy, Agriculture, and Natural Resources  
722 Cordell Hull Building  
425 5th Avenue North  
Nashville, TN 37243

**Re: Senate Bill 511; Commercial Dog Breeding License**

**Position: Oppose**

Dear Chairman Southerland and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Agriculture, and Natural Resources,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, I respectfully encourage you to oppose Senate Bill 511 which would require individuals who own 10 or more intact female dogs to register with the state as a commercial dog breeder. The legislation threatens Tennessee's hunting heritage by imposing unnecessary regulatory oversight and increasing costs for sportsmen and women who keep dogs for hunting, field trials, and other sporting purposes.

Founded in 1989, CSF's mission is to work with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting, and trapping. CSF has a strong track record in Tennessee, working with the Tennessee Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus and conservation partners to protect and advance the Volunteer State's sporting heritage by supporting pro-sportsmen legislation and state fish and wildlife management objectives. We offer the following comments based on our experience working on hunting issues for more than 30 years.

Tennesseans have a rich history of hunting with dogs, and hunters place great value on providing their loved companions with good care and well-maintained kennels. Senate Bill 511, however, jeopardizes the ability of Tennesseans to keep dogs for a variety of hunting purposes as well as field trials and hunt tests because hunters who manage small kennels would have to pay the same registration and inspection fees and be subjected to the same government oversight as large commercial dog breeding operations.

We further believe that this legislation is unneeded because Tennessee law provides more than sufficient protections for the care dogs.<sup>1</sup> We would submit that enforcement of existing animal cruelty laws would be more effective for improving the welfare of dogs than passing legislation that would be burdensome to small kennels regardless of the standard of care provided to their dogs. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulates commercial dog breeders. The USDA requires commercial dog breeding operations to be licensed, and noncompliant dog breeders are subject to federal investigation and action.

Senate Bill 511 would also allow local governments to adopt ordinances stricter than state law. We are particularly concerned with this provision because it would lead to a patchwork of regulations across the state that would be confusing and discourage the continued operation and establishment of sporting dog kennels.

Tennessee's 994,000 sportsmen and women contribute more than \$2.9 billion to the state's economy, spend more than \$1.8 billion annually, and support more than 26,380 jobs. As you consider this legislation, we hope you will take into account the importance of hunters and their dogs to the heritage and the economy of Tennessee.

In closing, we oppose Senate Bill 511 due to the negative impacts it would have on Tennessee's sportsmen and women, and we ask for your support opposing the bill. Thank you for considering our comments, and please let us know if you have questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,



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<sup>1</sup> Tenn. Code Ann. § 39-14-202