



May 28, 2012

The Honourable Dalton
McGuinty, MPP
Premier of Ontario
Room 281, Main
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Mr. Tim Hudak, MPP
Leader of the Official
Opposition
Room 381, Main
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A8

Ms. Andrea Horwath, MPP
Leader of the Ontario NDP
Room 113, Main
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A5

Dear Premier McGuinty, Mr. Hudak and Ms. Horwath:

On behalf of the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association (OVMA) and the over 4,000 veterinarians in the Province of Ontario, I am writing to you today to encourage you to work collaboratively towards the passage into law of Bill 16, *Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011*.

OVMA is pleased that MPPs from all parties are leading by example by working together to advocate a re-evaluation of breed-specific legislation (BSL). OVMA is happy to work with all interested stakeholders to revisit the current legislation in order to better protect Ontarians from dangerous dogs of any breed, without resulting in the needless deaths of dogs who pose no threat to the public.

Veterinarians, by their nature and training, take a science-based approach to any issue, including aggressive behaviour in dogs. Based on an extensive review of available research on the subject, OVMA has concluded that BSL is not an effective method of reducing the number of dog bites in humans, and that it has resulted in significant negative consequences for both people and dogs in Ontario. We support Bill 16 for the following reasons:

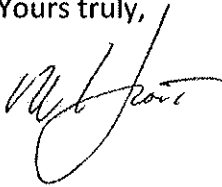
- BSL is not effective in dealing with dangerous dogs, specifically because research shows that numerous breeds are reported each year in attack and fatality reports.
- Recent statistics show that the number of bites has not decreased in Ontario and that other breeds were responsible for more bites overall than pit bull-type dogs prior to the ban.
- The current legislation has resulted in the unnecessary euthanasia of over 1,000 dogs and puppies in Ontario. Many of these had no history of violence against people or other animals.

- There is a better way: Research clearly shows that a more effective approach to dealing with dangerous dogs includes improving bite prevention education and implementing non-breed-specific, dangerous dog laws, enacted to place the primary responsibility for a dog's behavior on the owner, regardless of the dog's breed. The "Calgary model" is one that should be considered, for example.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter. We would be pleased to further share information regarding the research that OVMA has reviewed regarding BSL, which we were pleased to share with the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills on April 18th.

If you or your staff are interested in the research or have any questions regarding our position on the issue, please do not hesitate to contact OVMA's Manager of Government and External Relations, John Stevens at jstevens@ovma.org, or 800.670.1702, ext. 24.

Yours truly,



Dr. Dale Scott, DVM
President

cc:

Mr. Randy Hillier, MPP
Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington

Mr. Kim Craitor, MPP
Niagara Falls

Ms. Cheri DiNovo, MPP
Parkdale-High Park