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Pet Store Animal Sales Prohibition: Economically Disastrous and Ineffective

*Job loss, reduced consumer options and increase in animal welfare issues define truth
about pet sale bans in Los Angeles*

Washington, D.C. – On Tuesday, August 21, 2012 the Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee of the City of Los Angeles met to discuss Council File 11-0754, a city ordinance to ban the sale of all commercially bred dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores in the City of Los Angeles. The Council voted to adopt the ban which takes effect in six months. Eleven pet stores are affected by the ban putting approximately 60 people out of work.

“At a time when the economy is at its weakest is not the time to create more economic hardship on business owners, employees and their families,” says Mike Canning, president of PIJAC (Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council). “They are now just part of today’s American dialogue on a failing economy and they are a preventable statistic. This did not need to happen.” Canning is president of the world’s largest pet trade association, representing the interests of all segments of the pet industry throughout the United States. PIJAC represents the interests of breeders, retailers, manufacturers, distributors, and pet owners throughout the state of California, and specifically in Los Angeles.

“Retail pet sale bans do not address the welfare of animals, but simply reduce the available sources of pets for responsible pet owners,” says Canning. “Moreover, banning the sale of pets via pet stores creates a fertile underground market where animals and consumers have absolutely *no* protection – the very protection that this ban is supposed to provide increases backyard breeding and animal welfare issues.”

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association’s pet ownership calculator, there are approximately 2,886,675 dog, cat and bird owning households in Los Angeles (*based on a formula using 2010 U.S. Census Bureau statistics for population of Los Angeles County of 9,818,605*). These 11 stores that will go out of business helped fill the demand for pets and pet supplies which has generated more

than 4,500 jobs in the pet industry sector in the greater Los Angeles area - more than florists, hobby/toy/game stores, men's clothing and hardware stores. (*Source: 2009 County Business Patterns Retail Sector*).

“Who is going to help store owner Andy Mazor recover from this loss?” asks Canning. “His investment in the city, passion, care for the animals and his employees seem to mean nothing to a city that he made a commitment to. Pet stores have every reason to sell healthy pets to their customers, and people like Andy Mazor do. This is more than his livelihood – this is his life.”

PIJAC has worked with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) over the past 40 years to enhance effective enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The AWA was passed in 1966 and initially targeted the regulation of animals used in research. Amendments were made in the early 1970's expanding regulation to those who breed and sell pets as well.

Over the years, PIJAC has supported further amendments to this law to ensure that companion animals in pet stores were raised under humane conditions consistent with appropriate animal care standards. PIJAC continues to work directly with USDA to facilitate appropriate enforcement of the Act, helping to protect animals and the loving families that bring these pets into their homes.

Pet stores and their employees are also provided two guides published by PIJAC. Those include the *Animal Care Guidelines for the Retail Pet Industry* and *A Pet Store Employees Guide to Professional Success*. These guides are intended to educate retailers about the proper care of animals they sell.

PIJAC has developed *Care Sheets* for new pet owners available through their local pet retailer. *Care Sheets* provide basic care information including proper housing requirements, diet and other information for new pet owners to help ensure proper care of their pets.

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The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) provides its members a voice in state and national legislative issues through advocacy and timely information regarding upcoming policy issues that affect the pet industry, pet owners, and the animals they care for. Join PIJAC today at www.pijac.org.