



American Border Collie Association, Inc.

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March 28, 2007

Honorable Lloyd Levine
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0040

Dear Assemblyman Levine:

The American Border Collie Association is the chief registry for working Border Collies in the United States. On behalf of our more than 300 members in the state of California, and for the benefit of the many livestock producers in California who rely on working stockdogs for their livelihood, we are writing to oppose AB 1634.

While the drastic limitations on dog breeding which this bill would impose might be of some benefit in reducing overpopulation among pet dogs, their imposition on stockdogs would result in costs to the livestock industry and the consumer which would far outweigh any possible benefits.

Livestock producers throughout California rely on stockdogs to help in their operations. These dogs have been skillfully bred for many generations to develop the innate instincts and abilities that make them so useful. They are not registered with the AKC, UKC or ADBA, or with any other organization which advocates breeding to a conformation (appearance) standard. They are registered with working registries such as the ABCA, ASCA and NAAKR. Indeed, many of them are not registered at all. If they cannot continue to be bred, their genes will be lost, and within a generation their services will be lost, with enormous resulting harm to livestock production and the working gene pool.

Even if the preferential treatment given to some registries over others were addressed by adding the ABCA to the list of state-favored registries, this bill would impose severe hardship on working dog breeders. Working ability has been preserved and enhanced in Border Collies by breeding only the offspring of proven workers, who have themselves been trained to their full capability so that their strengths and weaknesses can be assessed. Rarely can it be determined whether or not a working Border Collie is worthy

of being bred until it is more than two years old. Certainly no such determination can be made about a four-month-old. Consequently, stockdog breeders would be required to purchase an intact permit for every pup they raise and train, even though only a small percentage of them will end up being bred. And since many of our best breeders also take in dogs for training, both from within California and from other states, they would have to obtain intact permits for these dogs also, since they would "possess" these dogs during the training period. These breeders are usually not wealthy people whose dogs are a hobby – they are cattle and sheep producers, for whom paying multiple permit fees would be a significant cost and a deterrent. The result would be a major hardship for these breeders and/or the forced premature neutering of talented dogs whose offspring ought to be the working dogs of the future.

For all these reasons, we urge that working dogs (and working dogs in training, since a four-month-old pup has barely reached the age when training can begin) be exempted from the requirements of AB 1634. Specifically, we recommend that Article 2 be amended by the addition of the italicized words below:

122336.1. (a) A person shall not own or possess within the state any cat or dog over the age of four months that has not been spayed or neutered, unless that person possesses an intact permit, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 122336; *provided, however, that this provision shall not apply to dogs which are being used or trained for the management of livestock.*

We would be glad to discuss with you the suitability of any alternative wording which would exempt working dogs from the provisions of this bill, or further specifics regarding the reasons for our objections.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our concerns.

Respectfully,

Michael Neary, Ph.D.
President
American Border Collie Association

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Also sent to Chair and Members of the Assembly Committee on Business and Professions