



TREIG E. PRONSCHINSKE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 92nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT
MAJORITY SERGEANT AT ARMS

Chairman Novak and members of the Assembly Committee on Local Government, thank you for hearing Assembly Bill 957 today. I look forward to telling you why this is common sense legislation.

Wisconsin is known throughout the nation and world as an agricultural hub. Agriculture is Wisconsin's second largest industry grossing over \$105 billion a year. With agriculture having such a large impact on our state's economy, it is our job to make sure that we give all of those who work in that business a positive leg up.

Various extremists throughout Wisconsin have tried time and time again to enact local ordinances that put our farmers behind the 8-ball, especially in comparison to other states around the Midwest. Extremist groups claim that enacting these various local ordinances helps negate potential animal mistreatment but these arguments should not be given the time of day.

Section 951.02 of our state statute says, "No person may treat any animal, whether belonging to the person or another, in a cruel manner. This section does not prohibit normal and accepted veterinary practices." This portion of the law was enacted in 1973. It has been over 50 years since animal mistreatment was banned in Wisconsin, so making claims that, "without these ordinances animal cruelty would persist." is baseless and clearly false.

Wisconsin has continuously worked to find new ways to protect our animals and to make sure their treatment is ethical and harm-free. AB 957 would allow for state law to preempt local rule in terms of agricultural ordinances. Oftentimes, when these new animal ordinances are enacted it forces farmers to act extremely quickly. These ordinances are costly, inconvenient, and completely unnecessary.

As stated previously, AB 957 would ban political subdivisions from adopting regulations that are harsher than that of state law. This bill would also ban political subdivisions from regulating the use of these animals as well and what kind of animals these political subdivisions can have. Of course, as stated in the beginning of my testimony: this all has to adhere to the animal mistreatment guidelines set in place in 1973.

Farmers are the hardest working individuals in our state and they never complain. It is because of this fact that I think it is so incredibly important that we give farmers a fair shot at succeeding. Enacting frivolous laws that hurt our farmers is simply cruel. I want to again reiterate that there are already very clear animal cruelty laws in places so any claims that this bill encourages animal cruelty is factually false.

With this being said, I want to again thank the committee for hearing AB 957 and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.



DAIRY BUSINESS
ASSOCIATION | DAIRY
FORWARD

January 24, 2024

Assembly Committee on Local Government

Testimony in favor of Assembly Bill 957

Good morning Chairman Novak, Ranking Member Baldeh and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of Assembly Bill 957.

My name is Chad Zuleger. I am director of government affairs representing the Dairy Business Association. Our membership includes dairy farmers, processors and a variety of affiliated businesses united to ensure producers are successful in our state and that the products they provide remain delicious, nutritious, and available worldwide.

Assembly Bill 957 addresses the correlation of animal welfare standards and agricultural practices. DBA advocates both for the well-being of animals and the sustainable development of production agricultural. AB 957 builds upon the existing legal framework that establishes animal welfare standards for those working in production animal agriculture. I want to thank the bill's authors, Representative Pronschinske and Senator Quinn, for bringing this legislation forward which builds on the state's commitment to safeguarding animal livestock through sensible regulations that ensure necessary food, water, proper shelter, and the prevention of crimes against animals. As we consider these standards, it is vital to recognize the unique challenges faced by those engaged in animal agricultural activities.

The legislation being considered appropriately addresses the balance between animal welfare and the needs of animal agriculture. By prohibiting local units of governments from adopting regulations that are more stringent than those at the state level, AB 957 ensures consistency and clarity for producers, an essential consideration for any business. This approach promotes the fairest and most practical regulatory environment that supports farmers without compromising the health and safety of animals.

The bill's provisions related to medications, vaccinations, and the use of animals on farms acknowledge the diverse nature of agricultural practices. Farmers must have the autonomy to make decisions regarding animal health, provided that such decisions align with state laws and do not pose a threat to public health or safety.

The restriction on regulating the species of animals within areas zoned exclusively or primarily for agricultural use is a reasonable step and recognizes the diversity of animal agriculture in our state. This provision ensures that farmers can choose the appropriate plan for animal care within their operations without unnecessary administrative hurdles.



I also appreciate the bill's consideration for a smooth transition by preventing the enforcement of existing regulations that conflict with the provisions of AB 957, unless there is a substantial threat to public health or safety. This demonstrates a practical and measured approach to regulatory change.

Finally, Assembly Bill 957 strikes a thoughtful balance between animal welfare and the needs of our agricultural communities. I urge this committee to support this bill, recognizing its importance in fostering a regulatory environment that supports responsible farming practices while upholding the sound welfare practices for the animals in our care.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions that I can.

Testimony on 2023 Assembly Bill 957

Assembly Committee on Local Government

January 24th, 2024

Thank you, Chair Novak and Committee Members for the opportunity to testify on 2023 Assembly Bill 957. I would like to thank the authors of this legislation Representative Pronschinske and Senator Quinn, as well as all of those in co-sponsorship and support of this legislation for their leadership on this emerging issue impacting agriculture.

The State of Wisconsin boasts a rich agricultural heritage and a thriving agricultural industry that contributes \$105 billion to our state's economy, a majority of which is attributable to livestock agriculture and its support.

However, concern is growing within Wisconsin agriculture about regulations and ballot initiatives in other states that restrict or dictate operational animal agricultural practices and protocols finding their way here.

Most notably, California enacted Ballot Proposition 12 or "Prop 12", which prohibited the sale of pork, veal, and eggs that did not conform to arbitrary production regulations. Although, the Supreme Court of the United States upheld California's legal authority to impose these standards, California is a net importer of these agricultural products and now imposes these production standards and their associated costs and operational edicts on farmers across the country. These types of laws can create fractured commodity markets interrupting the free flow of goods across state lines, and disrupting the supply chains that provide fresh, nutritious, and affordable food.

While Wisconsin is not a ballot initiative state, we could still be subjected to regulations that destabilize agricultural production and impose arbitrary regulations or prohibitions in the form of disruptive local ordinances. While agriculture in Wisconsin has legal protections from nuisance lawsuits from individuals under right to farm laws and statewide livestock siting standards, we lack protection from the destabilizing effects that can come from a new local ordinance imposing restrictions on agricultural production.

These types of laws could develop a patchwork of regulatory hurdles, creating new challenges for farmers, as well as the industries supporting agriculture, forcing them to adapt quickly to new requirements, which may necessitate costly modifications to existing facilities and changes in farming practices. This can impose an operational and financial burden on farmers, especially those in regions with diverse, small-scale agricultural operations. This can disproportionately impact smaller producers or drive them out of business which is directly contrary to the intent of the often emotionally-driven activist-led ordinances.

Just this past year, Wisconsin Farm Bureau was engaged in a lawsuit regarding a local ordinance mandating new arbitrary requirements such as dictating traffic flow, animal transport,

operational hours, odor controls, and other novel requirements on Wisconsin farmers. This ordinance was eventually rescinded by the township.

What many in this space may not know is that farmers across agriculture already participate in industry-led animal care, welfare, and environmental stewardship programs. In fact within the dairy industry, 99% of U.S. milk supply comes from farms participating in the FARM Animal Care Program. Meanwhile the We Care Program provides all of America's pork producers with education and training on animal care and environmental stewardship. Today, 85% of U.S. Pork production is Pork Quality Assurance Plus certified and 98% of industry animal handlers and transporters have achieved transport quality assurance certification.

We need these types of regulations to be consistent and uniform in Wisconsin, and to allow farmers in consultation with their veterinarians to set appropriate animal welfare protocols to meet the needs of their farms. This bill will help to avoid putting Wisconsin agriculture at a competitive disadvantage and disrupting food supply chains.



January 24, 2024

To: Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature

Re: Support for Two Legislative Initiatives supporting Agricultural Autonomy and Food Security

The State of Wisconsin boasts a rich agricultural heritage and a thriving agricultural industry that contributes \$105 billion to our state's economy and is how we feed ourselves, our neighboring states, and the world. However, concern is growing regarding laws, ordinances, and ballot initiatives that have been seen in other states finding their way to Wisconsin to restrict and dictate operational agricultural practices and protocols on farmers.

Most notably, California enacted Ballot Proposition 12 or "Prop 12" in 2018, which prohibited the sale of pork, veal, and eggs that did not conform to arbitrary production regulations. Although, the Supreme Court of the United States upheld California's legal authority to impose these standards, California is a net importer of these agricultural products and now imposes their production standards and their associated costs and operational edicts on farmers across the country.

The potential for laws like California's Prop 12 proliferating in other states would have severe detrimental effects on food supplies, farms, and dinner tables. While Wisconsin is not a ballot initiative or proposition state, the function of destabilizing agricultural production and commodity markets through arbitrary regulation or prohibitions could still be achieved.

The Ag Coalition, composed of the farm and agribusiness groups listed, jointly express our support for two legislative proposals to strengthen Wisconsin's commitment to agricultural autonomy and national commodity markets to keep food plentiful and affordable.

- Assembly Bill 957 / Senate Bill 892, The Protect our Farms Act, provides protections from activist-driven local ordinances that attempt to dictate the protocols and procedures that farmers set to meet the needs of their farms.
- Assembly Joint Resolution 98 / Senate Joint Resolution 91 reaffirms the Wisconsin Legislature's commitment to protect the autonomy of farmers in determining the best practices for their farms and acknowledging the damage that laws prohibiting the sale of agricultural goods can have on our nation's food supply.

Consistency, both nationwide and statewide, matched with farmers' privilege to set appropriate agricultural and livestock protocols, in consultation with their veterinarians, keeps Wisconsin agriculture at a competitive advantage for our unique and diverse commodity products.

The assigned organizations respectfully request your support for these critical legislative initiatives:

- | | |
|---|--|
| - Cooperative Network | - Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation |
| - Wisconsin Corn Growers Association | - Wisconsin Agribusiness Association |
| - Dairy Business Association | - Wisconsin Cattleman's Association |
| - Wisconsin Biomedical research Association | - Wisconsin Soybean Association |
| - Wisconsin Association of Meat Processors | - Wisconsin Biomass Energy Coalition |
| - Wisconsin Pork Association | - Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association |
| - Wisconsin Horse Council | |



AB 957 / SB 892 Fact Sheet

AB 957 violates long-standing protections on home rule without good cause

- Wisconsin has a long and proud history of supporting home rule and allowing tax-paying residents and their elected officials to have a say in their community, this bill would infringe on those long-standing rights.
- Rural communities often include farmers or others in agriculture on their boards who understand the local issues and needs. Urban communities have a greater need to balance land use and proximity to higher density communities. Both groups write their ordinances and resolutions in the best interest of their residents.
- The cosponsorship memo uses language such as “potential overreach” and “could create” but is not able to identify any actual risks. The only example is from California Prop 12, which is a statewide voter initiative that would not be protected by this bill.

The broad language in these bills have unintended and potentially devastating effects to municipal ordinances

- The inflexibility of Section 3 means that any ordinance, resolution, or order that has any conflict is rendered useless unless it presents a poorly defined “substantial threat to public health or safety.”
- A significant number of municipal ordinances across the state do not comply with portions of Section 2 as written, and also apply to areas of municipalities that contain agricultural zoning.
- That means entire sections of municipal codes across the state could be rendered completely invalid and unenforceable in the way the current bill is written. This would be a legal and logistical nightmare for towns and villages across our state.

AB 957 revokes existing municipal protections for animals and consumers

- In 2022, the City of Whitewater became the first municipality in the state to pass much needed protections against pet stores selling poor quality puppy mill animals through predatory lending.
- Waukesha, Beloit, Fort Atkinson, Sun Prairie, and other municipalities have also added these protections. This bill would reverse that protection
- These ordinances help protect against bad breeders and inhumane conditions at breeding facilities outside of our state. They also protect consumers against predatory lending and high cost medical, undisclosed medical issues with their pets.

AB 957 protect criminals and offenders and makes it harder for law enforcement and local communities to set and enforce proper rule of law



- This bill bizarrely prevents local rules from providing any additional limitations on sexual contact with animals by citing WI Chapter 944.18 on Bestiality as an example of a state rule that should be exclusively followed.
- The expansive use of “Animal” and dangerously broad definition of “Animal Facility” means this bill applies to almost anyone living in the zoned area, including groups that should not have additional protection such as hoarders and puppy mills.
- By limiting additional ordinances and enforcement, this bill removes tools from an already limited tool belt to help protect and save animals.

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January 24, 2024

Assembly Committee on Local Government
328 NW
Madison, WI 53713

RE: AB 957- preemption of certain local animal ordinances

Chairman Novak and members of the Assembly Committee on Local Government,

Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association (WBHA) is strongly in support of AB 957.

We have faced numerous challenges over the past few years with local governments interested in passing radical animal welfare ordinances specifically targeting hunters and hounds.

WBHA participated in the latest round of negotiations that led to the current state laws puppy mills and animal welfare standards for dogs. Wisconsin now has one of the nation's most restrictive codes for regulation dog sellers and breeders.

Many of our members will be covered by this law as they are in Ag Zoned areas and do raise enough dogs to be covered. However, most of our members will not be covered as they do not raise dogs for sale, but just for personal use.

Many municipalities have tried to pass ordinances that limit our ability to keep dogs in kennels, to keep a dog temporarily on a leash, and even to house dogs anywhere except in the house of the owner. These ordinances have generally been defeated, but it was clear throughout those local battles, that the local government was NOT trying to improve animal welfare but was instead targeting hunting dogs because they hunt.

Although our right to hunt and trap is constitutionally protected in Wisconsin, these local animal rights regulations could effectively end bear hunting with hounds without ever mentioning the word "hunt". We cannot allow that perversion of the constitution to stand.

We support AB 957 wholeheartedly as a big step in the right direction. However, we would encourage the legislature to consider expanding the bill to include those rural hunting dog kennels that do not engage in actual dog sales. We cannot allow animal rights extremists to overturn the constitution by nefariously targeting any dogs that happen to be kept in the outdoors.

It has never dawned on many of these animal rights activists that many dogs PREFER to be outside, and LOVE being involved in the hunt. Let us be clear – WBHA members love their dogs and treat them more humanely than any regulation would cover. The veterinarians that we use can tell you the thousands of dollars or more we invest in assuring that our hounds receive top notch care.

But we also hunt with them. Wisconsin's animal welfare standards are effective and tough, but they do not interfere with our right to hunt.

Please pass AB 957 to stop animal rights extremists from using local ordinances to end our sporting heritage.

Good morning. My name is Ammber King, and as an animal advocate, I would like to pledge my support for AB 957.

I have been a Veterinary professional for 24 years, and I currently hold licensure in Wisconsin (license # 405859). I am also the owner of a small animal Veterinary clinic in Southeastern Wisconsin. In addition to my Veterinary background, I am a member of the Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association, and currently hold a seat on their Board of Directors.

I have been heavily involved in animal welfare for over half of my life and have even given my professional testimony in actual animal abuse cases while living in Minnesota.

In my professional opinion, I believe that animal rights activists and weaponized local municipalities are direct threats to not only the hunting, sporting, and farming communities, but also to the Veterinary and human medical communities.

Many hunters own and raise dogs that they use specifically for hunting. These men and women heavily invest their time and money into their hunting dogs. While many hunting dogs primarily live outdoors, they are fed, watered, sheltered, and properly vetted to maintain their overall health. Hunters are extremely passionate about their sport, and their dogs are an integral part of their lifestyle. In general, dogs need a purpose in life, and hunting dogs are just as passionate about what they do as their owners are.

The same can be said for sled dogs and farm dogs. Again, they each serve a specific purpose, be it racing sleds or protecting their flocks and herds from predators, while simultaneously living their entire lives outdoors. These dogs are also properly fed, watered, sheltered, and vetted, and their owners are just as concerned about their overall well being as hunters are about their dogs.

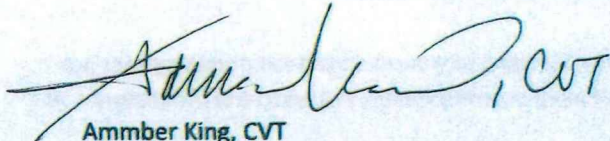
What many may not understand is that hunting, sled, and farm dogs usually prefer to be housed outdoors. They are quite literally bred to live outside and withstand the elements and are often extremely uncomfortable when brought indoors. Despite what animal rights extremists may think, these outdoor setups for hunting, sled, and farm dogs are not the same as puppy mills, and do not equate animal abuse. Nor does humanely raising farm animals to be used in medical research.

Several farms in Wisconsin breed and raise animals specifically to be sold to research facilities. These animals are humanely bred and raised with proper food, water, and shelter, as they are required to be healthy to be used for research purposes.

Animal research is integral to the advancement of both human and Veterinary Medicine. Research animals are well taken care of while housed in research facilities, and every aspect of their existence is heavily monitored and documented. From complex procedures such as porcine (pig) heart valve transplants and cochlear implants, to every day uses such as the development of medications and vaccines, animal research has paved the way in medical advancements across the board. Much of this research has even taken place right here in Madison at the various research facilities in the area, as well as at UW Madison itself. While animal rights activists may disagree with the use of animals for research purposes, their lives have undoubtedly been infinitely affected by said research, just as all of our lives have been as well.

Though I firmly support AB 957, I believe there is still much work to be done to prevent overreach of local municipalities that are spurred on by animal rights extremists. In my professional opinion, the attempts to weaponize local municipalities against hunting dogs, specifically, have very little to do with actual animal welfare, and far more to do with attempting to end hunting with dogs all together; something that is enjoyed by thousands of Wisconsin residents. Therefore, I believe it would be beneficial for the legislature to extend the bill to protect farms, sled dog kennels, and hunting dog kennels, while also ensuring protection of our right to hunt.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amber King, CVT". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'A' and 'K'.

Amber King, CVT
President Tillie Lake Veterinary Clinic
WBHA BOD



**WISCONSIN
PAYS HUNTERS
WHO LET WOLVES
KILL THEIR DOGS**



Alliance for Animals
AllAnimals.org

WISCONSIN



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January 24, 2024

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Representative Todd Novak, Chair and Members
Assembly Committee on Local Government

RE: Support for AB 957, Preemption of Certain Local Animal Ordinances

Dear Chairman Novak and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association (WVMA), I am writing to ask you to **support AB 957**, which would preempt certain local animal ordinances.

The WVMA represents licensed veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and veterinary clinic professionals from across the State of Wisconsin. Our vision is to be the foundational resource and advocate for Wisconsin veterinarians. To accomplish this, WVMA members champion legislation that supports veterinarians, their patients, and the profession.

WVMA is guided by the eight integrated principles established by the American Veterinary Medical Association for the development of animal welfare practices:

- Decisions regarding animal care, use, and welfare shall be made by balancing scientific knowledge and professional judgment with consideration of ethical and societal values.
- Animals must be provided water, food, proper handling, health care, and an environment appropriate to their care and use, with thoughtful consideration for their species-typical biology and behavior.
- Animals should be cared for in ways that minimize fear, pain, stress, and suffering.
- Procedures related to animal housing, management, care, and use should be continuously evaluated, and when indicated, refined or replaced.
- Conservation and management of animal populations should be humane, socially responsible, and scientifically prudent.
- Animals shall be treated with respect and dignity throughout their lives and, when necessary, provided a humane death.
- The veterinary profession shall continually strive to improve animal health and welfare through scientific research, education, collaboration, advocacy, and the development of legislation and regulations.
- The responsible use of animals for human purposes, such as companionship, food, fiber, recreation, work, education, exhibition, and research conducted for the benefit of both humans and animals, is consistent with the Veterinarian's Oath.

However, the WVMA believes that any animal welfare standards or regulations should be uniformly established statewide and should not be developed on a local, patchwork or municipality-specific level. Statewide consistency provides certainty for both farmers and veterinarians. Our large animal veterinarians work with farmers daily to ensure that livestock are cared for. AB 957 would prohibit municipalities from adopting regulations that establish animal welfare regulations that are more stringent than state law and we support this provision.

ENRICHING THE LIVES OF
WISCONSIN VETERINARIANS



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In addition, this legislation would prohibit local governments from requiring or prohibiting animal medications or vaccinations at the local level. This is an issue of great concern to the WVMA. The WVMA strongly advocates for the protection and preservation of the professional judgment of veterinarians regarding use and administration of vaccines and other medications *in accordance with federal law*. The process for the approval of prescription medications, vaccines and their use in animals is highly regulated, reviewed and scientifically scrutinized by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA). We do not support local governments supplanting the FDA review and approval process with their own restrictions or regulations. Such a framework would be detrimental to both animal and human health, as controlling zoonotic disease is also critical to maintaining a healthy human population. We do not believe that any local government is equipped to adequately review drug development and use. As such, we strongly support this provision in AB 957.

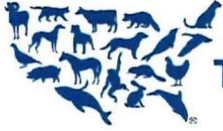
Further, the Wisconsin Veterinary Examining Board (VEB) regulates the practice of veterinary medicine and provides a uniform system of regulation for all veterinarians in Wisconsin. We believe that the VEB does an excellent job licensing and enforcing the laws related to the practice of veterinary medicine in Wisconsin. Our statutes and regulation provide regulatory certainty to our licensed professionals *and* provide Wisconsin residents with a process to seek guidance or enforcement of violations against bad actors should those situations arise.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We urge you to support AB 957.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jo-ell Carson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jo-ell Carson
Executive Director
Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association



THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

Testimony in Opposition to Assembly Bill 957
Presented to the Assembly Committee on Local Government
Megan Nicholson, Wisconsin State Director
The Humane Society of the United States
January 24, 2024

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States and our Wisconsin supporters, we urge you to oppose AB 957 because it is an attack on animals, consumers, and local governments.

While AB 957 may appear to target local regulation of farms, its broad language would likely reward a wide range of potential bad actors by shielding them from local oversight, including: puppy mills, puppy-selling pet stores, facilities that breed and sell dogs, like beagles, for research, pet trainers, boarding facilities, or daycare operators, and those that breed, house, or display dangerous wildlife.

The bill would prohibit cities, counties, and villages from regulating an animal facility in an area zoned “exclusively or primarily for agricultural use” unless the activity impacted presents a substantial threat to public health or safety. **Broad, vague, and undefined terms would leave local elected officials without clarity, which would likely have a chilling effect on a wide range of regulations that are needed to protect animals, consumers, and public health.**

- “Animal facility” is broadly defined as any farm or “other commercial operation that raises or confines animals as a commercial enterprise” – essentially anyone who keeps animals on their property with a profit motive.
- “Animal” includes all non-human warm-blooded creatures, reptiles, and amphibians – virtually any animal, including beloved pets.
- “Primarily for agriculture use” is not defined and the bill is silent on what could be interpreted as such. Would commercial or residential areas with designated “agriculture uses” be included? Would any allowance of agriculture—another undefined term—be covered?
- “Substantial threat to public health or safety” is not defined, which would leave local elected officials to interpret what is included and leave them vulnerable to litigation from those who interpret it differently and stand to gain from no local regulation.

Just as states need the authority to adopt stronger protections than the federal government, communities must be allowed to adopt stronger protections than states to align with their community’s needs and the will of their residents. AB 957 violates governing principles of smaller, more limited government by disregarding the fact that local governments most often know what is best for their communities.

AB 957 protects cruel puppy mills that keep dogs in conditions that most Wisconsinites would be appalled by. Under its provisions, municipalities would not be able to enact or enforce ordinances that require humane treatment of dogs kept for breeding or prohibit massive breeding facilities from operating. Federal and state oversight of commercial breeders in Wisconsin is not sufficient to protect the parent dogs stuck in these facilities nor the families who will end up with puppies from them. Localities must retain the authority to crack down on facilities like these:

- In February 2023, the USDA cited a Hillsboro breeder after discovering that 26 puppies died in a single day. The puppies reportedly died after stove vents were not closed overnight and they were

exposed to extremely high heat. Prior to the 2023 visit, USDA had not inspected the property since 2020.

- At another Hillsboro facility, USDA inspectors found 15 different violations between April 2022 and March 2023. Cleaning and sanitation issues were found during all four visits. Other issues included some puppies who didn't have enough space, excessive feces, and a strong odor.
- At a Cambria breeding facility, in January 2023, six months after finding a Yorkie in need of care, USDA inspectors found the same dog still had a loose tooth and now had exposed tooth roots, a spot under one eye with pus and drainage, and an open, draining sore near the dog's other eye.
- In December 2022, USDA cited a Tomah breeder for lack of veterinary care to a Shih tzu with a clouded, dented cornea and trying to self-treat with unprescribed eye ointment. In 2021, this breeder was cited for self-treating a dog's open wound.
- In November 2022, USDA cited an Elroy breeder with 200+ dogs for a Labrador retriever with an open sore and hair loss who had not received veterinary care and some dogs and puppies without enough space.

To take away local control of commercial breeding facilities is to protect and promote some of the most egregious companion animal abusers. This does not align with the values of our state.

AB 957 could protect puppy-selling pet stores known for selling sick puppies from cruel puppy mills to unsuspecting consumers. The broad language of the bill could stop localities from cracking down on pet stores with known animal welfare and consumer protection issues, so long as it could be argued that the pet store was in an area zoned "primarily" for agriculture use. As such, local elected officials would be forced to allow pet stores to import and sell puppies from puppy mills, which too often leads to misleading sales tactics, predatory lending, sick puppy sales, and disease outbreaks. It also can exacerbate pet overpopulation at time when so many shelters and rescues are already overwhelmed.

AB 957 protects roadside zoos and other industries using dangerous captive wild animals that place the public at risk of injury and infectious disease. The broad language of this bill would prevent local governments from addressing dangerous exhibitions that create a broad range of public health and safety concerns. Animal exhibition is a poorly regulated industry with little federal and state oversight. Sixteen people have died and at least 350 have been injured at roadside zoos and similar attractions, and more than 200 injuries and 10 deaths have been associated with using dangerous wild animals in traveling shows. It is imperative that local governments retain the ability to determine if certain wild animal exhibitions and acts pose an unacceptable risk to public health and safety and whether local law enforcement has the capacity to appropriately contain a rampaging elephant, tiger running amok, or an escaped primate.

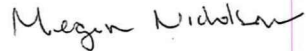
These facilities and shows often put unpredictable wild animals, including species that can transmit deadly diseases to people, in close contact with the public. For example, in the U.S., captive big cats have transmitted COVID-19 to people, elephants have infected people with tuberculosis, and more than a hundred zoonotic diseases have been identified in primates. Nearly 200 localities have passed various restrictions governing the use of wild animals in circuses and traveling shows and numerous communities. These measures are often initiated in communities concerned with public health, safety, and compromised welfare common in traveling shows.

AB 957 could hinder protections for dogs and cats used in experiments and prevent local laws that allow them to be adopted once their time in the laboratory ends. Dogs are often used in experiments funded by federal research agencies, like NIH, or to meet safety standards imposed by federal regulatory agencies, such as the EPA or FDA. Federal law, however, does not offer assurance that animals will be protected upon the experiment's conclusion. Sixteen states require adoption to be offered, but unfortunately Wisconsin has enacted no such protection despite the documented resilience and affection of

these animals once they are given the chance to flourish in a home environment. This law would prevent localities from ensuring that all adoptable dogs and cats are provided a chance of living in a caring home, increasing the likelihood that many will be unnecessarily euthanized.

We urge committee members to do right by Wisconsin's animals and citizens you represent and oppose AB 957. A bill that lumps Wisconsin's traditional family farmers in with notorious and shameful operators of puppy mills, exotic animal breeders and profit-hungry commercial retailers is an affront to Wisconsinites.

Sincerely,



Megan Nicholson
Wisconsin State Director
The Humane Society of the United States
mnicholson@humanesociety.org

AB 957 – Preemption of local animal protection ordinances: An Attack on Animals, Constituents & Local Control

AB 957 is not exclusively about preempting local regulation of this; ↓



AB 957 also preempts local oversight and regulation of operations like this. ↓



The “Protect Our Farms Act” shields puppy mill operators from local oversight and regulation.

While AB 957 may appear to target local regulation of farms, its broad language would likely reward a wide range of potential bad actors by shielding them from local oversight, including: puppy mills.

Broad, vague, and undefined terms would leave local elected officials without clarity and vulnerable to litigation.

- “Animal” includes all non-human warm-blooded creatures, reptiles, and amphibians – virtually any animal. Numerous ag-related statutes specifically define “Livestock”. What is the intent behind using the sweeping definition of “Animal”?
- “Primarily for agriculture use” is not defined and the bill is silent on what could be interpreted as such.
- “Substantial threat to public health or safety” is not defined.

AB 957 protects puppy mills that keep dogs in conditions most Wisconsinites would be appalled by.

- Municipalities would not be able to enact or enforce ordinances that require humane treatment of dogs kept for breeding or prohibit massive breeding facilities from operating.
- To take away local control of commercial breeding facilities is to protect and promote some of the most egregious companion animal abusers.
- The broad language of the bill could stop localities from cracking down on pet stores with known animal welfare and consumer protection issues.

AB 957 protects roadside zoos and other industries using dangerous captive wild animals that place the public at risk of injury and infectious disease.

- This bill would prevent local governments from addressing dangerous exhibitions that create a broad range of public health and safety concerns.
- Numerous municipalities prohibit ownership of dangerous wild animals. This bill could repeal those protections.

AB 957 nullifies numerous animal protection measures supported by your constituents.

- Citizens, local elected officials and law enforcement have worked tirelessly to enact ordinances that align with the values and will of their community. AB 957 violates governing principles of smaller, more limited government and is an attack on Wisconsinites and Home Rule.

Oppose AB 957!