

The Honorable Senator \_\_\_\_\_  
The U.S. Senate, U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator,

As a voting constituent who cares about animal protection laws, I strongly encourage you to cosponsor the Pet Safety and Protection Act (S. 451). Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI) introduced S. 451 on February 17, 2005 to assure animals sold to medical research facilities are acquired legally. The PSPA also fortifies the Animal Welfare Act by banning Class "B" animal dealers from furnishing dogs and cats to research laboratories.

Class B dealers, who derive most of their income from contracts with research labs, amass dogs and cats from "random sources." They routinely falsify health certificates and do not maintain verifiable records on the acquisition or disposition of their animals. Many employ "bunchers" to steal companion animals or round-up strays. Some animals are attained fraudulently from "free to a good home" ads. Experimenters cannot distinguish between legally obtained animals and those procured via theft or fraud. Moreover, the research industry is not required to patrol animal dealers.

C.C. Baird was the nation's most prolific trafficker in random-source animals until the USDA revoked his Class B license and imposed an unprecedented fine in January 2005. Baird's trail of counterfeit health certificates and muddled records made it impossible to trace the roots of tens of thousands of animals sold to research labs nationwide. USDA/APHIS charged Baird with hundreds of AWA violations after a raid of his Martin Creek Kennels exposed rampant abuse, neglect, and mass dog graves.

C.C. Baird's case illuminates the need for stronger animal protection laws. Class B dealers like Baird typically fail to provide veterinary care or adequate food, water and shelter. Animals survive in squalid conditions, tethered or caged outdoors with no protection from weather extremes.

Since the term "random source" was legalized in 1996, interstate traffic in stolen animals has flourished. Weak laws let dealers sell animals of suspect origin to researchers, illegal dogfighters, breeders, and the meat and fur trades. Ultimately, USDA/APHIS ought to terminate all Class B random-source dealers. In the meantime, your co-sponsorship of the Pet Safety and Protection Act would stop remaining dealers from selling random-source animals to research laboratories.

Senator Akaka's bill enhances the Animal Welfare Act and empowers the USDA to prevent dealers from inflicting untold pain upon animals and the people who love them. Please urge the Chairman of the Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee to hold hearings on S. 451 as soon as possible. Thank you for helping to safeguard America's cherished companion animals.

Sincerely,