

Department of Environmental Resources

Prince George's County, Maryland

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PRESS RELEASE
County Announces Changes to Pit Bull Policy

LARGO, MD – The Prince George 's County Department of Environmental Resources (DER) announced a change to the county's Pit Bull policy that will allow the out-of-county adoption of Pit Bulls, effective February 1, 2006.

Currently, according to Prince George's County Code, it is illegal to own or harbor a non-registered Pit Bull in Prince George 's County. To legally own a Pit Bull in the county, the dog must have been registered with the Animal Management Division prior to February 3, 1997, and maintain a current Pit Bull registration. The law also states that if a registered Pit Bull produces a litter, the puppies are considered illegal and must leave the county. Citizens and residents are prohibited by law from selling or giving away Pit Bulls in Prince George 's County.

DER Director Donna M.P. Wilson, Esq. stated that the Pit Bull policy will be amended as follows:

While the Department will continue not to allow individuals or rescue organizations to adopt Pit Bulls, we will allow the out-of-county transfer of Pit Bulls to county or State animal control facilities that agree to accept the transfer. Once the dogs are under the control of the out-of-county animal control facility, any adoption will be in accordance with that facility's policies and procedures, and the receiving county's laws, rules and regulations governing the adoption of animals.

Due to safety issues, only county and State animal control facilities will be allowed to transfer and receive Pit Bulls for out-of-county adoption.

For more information, contact the Animal Management Division at (301) 499-8300.

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For Further information:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Adrienne Lefkowitz, President

Maryland Dog Federation, Greenbelt, MD

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MEDIA RELEASE

Greenbelt, Maryland, February 1, 2006 -- Thousands and thousands of county residents join the Maryland Dog Federation in applauding the recent change in policy made by Prince George's County government regarding certain breeds of dogs - specifically, allowing out-of-county adoption of "pit bulls" to county or state animal control facilities. To the public, it marks the county's realization that the vast majority of pit bull dogs it seizes because of this hurtful law are not dangerous, but are beloved family pets ripped from their home and killed for no reason other than what they look like.

The county's nine-year ban of the American Pit Bull Terrier (or any dog resembling that breed) has proven ineffective in many ways. The usefulness of breed bans have long been disproven by studies in this country and world wide. Even in our own county, the records clearly show that it is enforcement of our dangerous and nuisance animal laws that keep the public safe, not the pit bull ban. Our county's current, fear-based pit bull ban is simply not a valid or cost effective way to protect the public. Killing an innocent dog that is wagging its tail and licking the face of the county employee administering the lethal injection takes an unimaginable emotional toll. We call upon our county government to continue to enforce our breed-neutral dangerous dog laws, to act upon nuisance animal complaints before those animals become a threat to the community, and to repeal the breed ban.

Thousands of concerned pet owners and their neighbors in this county and around the region know that the vast majority of dogs of any breed or type, including bull and terrier types, are beloved, well-mannered family pets that never pose a threat to the public in their entire lives. Taxpayers are also well aware that the current ban wastes valuable tax dollars killing pets that have never harmed anyone.

We continue to encourage Prince George's County government to seek fiscally sound, rational public safety alternatives that treat responsible pet owners and taxpayers fairly and equally. We urge them to continue to enforce its effective, breed-neutral dangerous and nuisance animal laws with a goal to prevent injury before it happens and punish those owners who cannot control their animals – goals which are fully attainable in concert with the repeal of our county's hurtful pit bull ban.

The Maryland Dog Federation is committed to promote, protect and defend responsible dog ownership along with public safety. For further information, please contact president, Adrienne Lefkowitz, at 301 693-2256, or euniverz@aol.com.