



# FairPetLaws.org - Policy Q&A; (Draft for Legislative Review)

Ending the Online Sales Pipeline Driving Pet Overpopulation

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## ***Q1. What is the core problem this law aims to solve?***

Backyard breeders and puppy mills post an estimated 10-15 million pet-sale ads each year, selling unaltered animals into an unregulated market. Many of these animals ultimately enter shelters, driving overpopulation, higher euthanasia rates, and straining limited public resources.

## ***Q2. How do these online pet sales impact animal shelters?***

An estimated 75% of animals entering shelters are unaltered, indicating they came from sellers who failed to spay or neuter. These pets often reproduce, creating additional unwanted litters. The result is a cycle of intake, overcrowding, and euthanasia.

## ***Q3. Why focus on online ads rather than only the sellers?***

Advertising is the enforcement choke point. Without online ads, most backyard breeders and sellers cannot reach buyers or make a profit. Direct enforcement on individual sellers is expensive and inefficient. Cutting off the ad supply is the most cost-effective way to disrupt the sales pipeline.

## ***Q4. What role do online platforms play in this crisis?***

Major platforms (e.g., Craigslist, Facebook, YouTube, Google) and numerous classified sites currently allow mass pet listings without systematic verification of legal compliance. This broad reach enables unregulated activity and undermines responsible sellers and public shelters.

## ***Q5. What does FairPetLaws.org propose?***

Require any person or business advertising animals for sale in California to:

- Register annually in a secure statewide registry;
- Provide a valid California seller's permit or sales tax number;
- Submit government photo ID and breeding/sales location;
- Disclose the place of birth for each puppy or litter;
- Provide a veterinary health certificate for each animal advertised;
- Pay an annual compliance fee to fund the registry and auditing.

Online platforms would be prohibited from accepting or displaying pet-sale ads unless the seller's registration and documentation are verified through the registry.

## ***Q6. How will enforcement work?***

- Platforms must reject any ad lacking verified seller registration and tax compliance;

- Airlines and ground-transport providers are prohibited from accepting animals for shipment from non-compliant sellers;
- Websites, platforms, airlines, and transport companies that accept non-compliant ads or animals face penalties of \$5,000-\$10,000 per violation;
- No taxpayer-funded raids or investigations are required - the system is largely self-enforcing through ad and transport access controls.

***Q7. What happens if pet sellers refuse to register?***

Non-compliant sellers are blocked from advertising and shipping animals. Without online reach and lawful transport, they cannot sell at profitable volume, eliminating the incentive to operate outside the rules.

***Q8. Won't backyard breeders just go underground?***

Some may try, but selling animals at scale without ads or transport access is extremely difficult. Most online sellers depend on digital visibility and shipping to find buyers; blocking those channels collapses the business model.

***Q9. Will this burden responsible sellers?***

No. Responsible sellers already operate transparently, maintain tax compliance, and meet health standards. The law protects them by leveling the playing field and removing unfair competition from unregulated, low-cost operators.

***Q10. How does this benefit shelters and rescues?***

- Fewer unaltered animals sold -> fewer unwanted litters;
- Lower intake -> more capacity for true sheltering and medical care;
- Reduced euthanasia and higher adoption rates;
- Resources can be redirected to spay/neuter and community support.

***Q11. What about enforcement costs - will this burden taxpayers?***

No. The system relies on platform and transport-provider compliance, using existing verification workflows. Pet sellers fund the registry through fees; no new taxpayer-funded enforcement program is required.

***Q12. Is buying a puppy online comparable to adopting from a shelter?***

No. Online purchases are often fast and anonymous, with limited screening or education. Shelter adoptions include counseling, accountability, and support. This disparity diverts would-be adopters online, increasing shelter burdens.

***Q13. Who benefits from this legislation?***

- Shelters and rescues: Lower intake and euthanasia;
- Responsible sellers: Fair competition under uniform rules;
- Pet buyers: Transparent seller information and healthier animals;
- Communities: Fewer strays and reduced public shelter costs.

***Q14. What is the ultimate goal of FairPetLaws.org?***

To eliminate the profitability of unregulated online operators, end anonymous internet pet sales, and bring pet overpopulation under control - protecting animals, shelters, buyers, and communities across California.