



## THE CITY OF KEY WEST

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To: The City Commission for the City of Key West

From: Ron Ramsingh, Chief Assistant City Attorney

Date: July 14, 2016

RE: A new ordinance limiting the retail sales of animals in the City of Key West

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### **Action statement:**

This proposed ordinance is sponsored by Commissioner Sam Kaufman. The proposed ordinance seeks to prohibit the retail sales of animals within the city limits of Key West that originate from what are commonly referred to as “puppy mills”. The ordinance also seeks to prohibit the operation of puppy mills within the City of Key West and require pet stores to display certificates of origination for all dogs, cats, rabbits, ferrets, and guinea pigs that they sell.

### **Background:**

According to the SPCA, pet stores, breeders and retailers pose a significant strain on animal shelters and other rescue organizations. Nationally, approximately 7.6 animals enter shelters annually. From those, 1.2 million dogs and 1.4 million cats are euthanized annually. In addition to the staggering national numbers of unwanted cats and dogs, Key West has seen a large increase in the number of

surrendered rabbits, guinea pigs, ferrets and other rodents. The increase presents a significant burden to the Florida Keys SPCA locally and other non-profit and government rescue organizations on a broader scale. By many accounts, there is a growing national trend to regulate or ban the retail sales of animals; particularly dogs and cats. Florida cities seem to be leading the charge in such regulations with 44 other municipalities having already enacted ordinances to address this concern. The proposed ordinance seeks to prohibit the commercial or retail sales of dogs, cats, rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs that originate from “mills”. There is an exemption for the placement of such animals in pet stores or pet retail locations by rescue organizations. There is also an exemption for individual (non-commercial or retail) hobby breeders and stud services that are limited to one litter per calendar year. The penalty for a violation of the proposed ordinance is the possibility of up to 60 days in county jail and/or up to a \$500.00 fine as a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree misdemeanor.

**Options:**

1. To approve the proposed ordinance which will eliminate the retail sales of dogs, cats, rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs that originate from “mills”, thereby making impulse purchases of such animals less likely. This ordinance will alleviate the increased burden that our local animal shelter has experienced and will decrease eventual euthanasia
2. To defeat the proposed ordinance. Local rescue organizations will continue to be inundated with an increase in animals that have been impulsively purchased at retail locations with owners who have change their minds about owning such animals.

**Recommendation:** To approve the proposed ordinance thereby creating a ban on the retail sales of dogs, cats, rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs and other rodents.

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