June 18, 2020

Re: AKC Supports H. 118 - Liability Protection

Dear President Berger, Speaker Moore, and Members of the North Carolina General Assembly:

On behalf of our 145 affiliate dog clubs in North Carolina, the American Kennel Club (AKC) writes today to express our support and appreciation for the amended version of House Bill 118, which will protect our local North Carolina dog clubs from liability when safely hosting events in the state.

The American Kennel Club (AKC) was established in 1884 to promote the study, breeding, exhibiting, and advancement of purebred dogs. Today, our Operations Center in Raleigh and its 200 employees, along with our North Carolina dog clubs, are dedicated to promoting responsible dog ownership and breeding throughout our state, including hosting dog events such as breed conformation shows, field trials, obedience trials, and performance events that focus on a dog’s ability to perform jobs for which its breed was originally developed.

Almost 700 AKC-sanctioned dog events were held in North Carolina in 2019, with more than 80,000 dogs participating from across the country. These events promote and celebrate responsible dog ownership, breeding and training, while also generating significant income for local North Carolina communities and businesses through facility rental, restaurants, hotels, dog care, and other expenses. Spending by AKC dog show exhibitors for a show weekend can inject more than $1.7 million into the local economy.

In an effort to ensure the safety of exhibitors and animals, the AKC has provided our clubs with extensive guidelines to be used in conjunction with CDC and state COVID-19 guidelines to follow when hosting events and shows. House Bill 118 would protect our local clubs from liability when holding events in the state if someone chooses to not comply with reasonable guidelines established to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

We encourage you to support this bill that would be a great benefit to local dog clubs and the numerous events they host, which in turn have a significant positive impact on North Carolina communities.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss our support, please do not hesitate to contact me at 919-816-3720 or doglaw@akc.org.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sheila Goffe
Vice President, Government Relations
American Kennel Club