

Rep. Ken Rahjes
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
H.Agriculture@house.ks.gov
VIA EMAIL

February 12, 2024

Chairman Rahjes and Members of the Committee,

Re: HB 2542

My name is Vanessa Cowie, and I am the Executive Director of Prairie Paws Animal Shelter with locations in Ottawa and Manhattan, Kansas. Between our two locations, we serve over 3,000 animals annually. Our mission is *to provide compassionate care and placement for animals in need*. Through the tireless efforts of our staff and volunteers, Prairie Paws Animal Shelter gives aid and comfort to the homeless shelter animal, educates the community in responsible pet ownership, helps reunite pets with owners by offering low cost microchipping, provides pet adoptions, and creates a safer, more humane community.

I am writing today to voice my support for HB 2542. Our organization would also like to see a minor amendment to the bill in Section 10, which concerns boarding licenses. The bill currently has an exemption for veterinary clinics obtaining a boarding license, and we would like to see "animal shelters" added to the exemptions.

Our shelter has opened its doors to animals in need during extreme heat or extreme cold weather events. These animals, however, have loving owners who are in need of temporary shelter themselves and unable to find services for themselves *and* their pet. Animal shelters across the country are implementing similar programs, whether it is longer term temporary housing, overnight emergency housing, or acting as a safety net for domestic violence survivors. These services are often offered sporadically throughout the year, especially in the rural areas that our organization serves. Animal shelters would benefit greatly from an exemption to needing a boarding facility license as it would allow these services to continue without the burden of needing to renew a license or worrying if a license elapses if the program is not offered during a calendar year.

With this change, licensed animal shelters would not have to worry about a boarding license if they decide to offer a temporary boarding community support program. I urge the Committee to consider this minor change to help keep pets and people safe and housed, and to support the entirety of HB 2542 for passage.

Sincerely,



Vanessa Cowie

Executive Director

Prairie Paws Animal Shelter Inc.