



Press Release February 15, 2022

Virginia Legislature Votes to Protect Beagles, Hold Cumberland Dog-Breeding Facility Accountable for Ongoing Violations of the Federal Animal Welfare Act

Richmond, Va. — The Virginia Coalition for Beagle Protection celebrates the passage by an overwhelming majority of eight bills filed as a bipartisan effort to address the inhumane and unlawful conditions at Envigo, a massive dog-breeding facility in Cumberland, Virginia. The bills have passed their respective chambers and now cross over.

“We are so grateful for the tremendous strides our legislators have made in moving these critical pieces of legislation forward to address the horrific conditions at the Envigo breeding facility,” says the Virginia Coalition for Beagle Protection. “Meaningful legislation is woefully overdue. We thank Senators Boysko, Stanley, and Marsden and Delegate Bell for their leadership and commitment to improving conditions for the long-suffering beagles at Envigo. Time after time, Envigo has promised to improve conditions at its Cumberland facility and meet the basic requirements of the federal Animal Welfare Act, and time after time, it has failed. The docile beagles currently held and bred in Cumberland County need and deserve protection and humane treatment. Virginians expect the General Assembly to take action, and we look forward to seeing these bills continue to garner landslide votes in the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates.”

Background

- Envigo—which has sold dogs to facilities within the U.S. and overseas, including to laboratories in Japan and Taiwan—has been operating without state oversight since 1961.
- The Cumberland facility was cited by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in July 2021 for 26 violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA), including 12 direct or critical violations. A second inspection in October 2021 revealed 13 more violations, including 11 repeat and seven critical or direct ones.
- Findings of an [exposé by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals \(PETA\)](#) mirrored the USDA’s inspection reports, including that food was willfully withheld from nursing mother dogs for days, dogs were routinely left in cages while workers sprayed them with high-pressure hoses, and puppies fell through holes in the cages and ended up in drains, covered with fecal matter. PETA’s investigator found more than 360 dead puppies in the course of the investigation alone.
- [SB 87](#) and [HB 1350](#), championed by Sen. Bill Stanley (R-20) and Del. Rob Bell (R-58), are companion bills that will prohibit dealers and breeders from importing or selling dogs or cats bred by anyone with certain AWA violations.
- Sen. Stanley is also carrying three other pieces of legislation: [SB 88](#), which will require dog and cat breeders to maintain and report to the state records of all the animals they sell to laboratories; [SB 90](#), which expands current Virginia law and will require dog and cat breeders that sell to laboratories to offer “surplus” animals for adoption prior to euthanasia; and [SB 604](#), which clarifies that dogs and cats in the possession of breeders that sell to laboratories are protected by Virginia’s animal cruelty statute.
- Sen. Jennifer Boysko (D-33) is also carrying multiple bills: In addition being chief co-patron on Sen. Stanley’s bills, she’s carrying [SB 442](#), which will require dog and cat breeders that sell to laboratories

to report certain records monthly to the state veterinarian, and [SB 457](#), which will prohibit breeding dogs or cats for sale to overseas laboratories or to U.S. laboratories that will use the animals for testing or research not required by federal law or regulation if the breeder has certain AWA violations.

- Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37) introduced [SB 535](#), which will increase oversight of facilities breeding dogs and cats to be sold for experimentation by directing the state veterinarian to hire an animal welfare oversight officer who will inspect and oversee the operations of dog and cat breeders that sell to laboratories. The animal welfare oversight officer's salary will be covered, thanks to an annual fee paid by Envigo.

About Us

The Virginia Coalition for Beagle Protection was formed in 2022 in direct response to the situation at Envigo. It's being led by the Humane Society of the United States, PETA, and the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies. The Virginia Coalition for Beagle Protection represents hundreds of thousands of Virginia residents and more than 35 Virginia animal welfare organizations from across the Commonwealth. Current members include these:

- Alleghany Humane Society
- Animal Resources of Tidewater
- Basset Rescue of Old Dominion
- Bay Beagle Rescue (Hampton Roads)
- Beagles and Bentleys (Richmond)
- Bristol Humane Society Margaret B. Mitchell Spay/Neuter Clinic
- Bully Advocate & Rescue Collective (Hampton Roads)
- Cat Action Team (Charlottesville)
- Chesapeake Humane Society
- Danville Area Humane Society
- Dogs Deserve Better Blue Ridge
- Gray Face Acres Senior Dog Rescue (Northern Virginia)
- Heritage Humane Society (Williamsburg)
- Homes Fur Hounds (Williamsburg)
- Humane Society of Fairfax County
- The Humane Society of the United States
- Lucky Dog Animal Rescue (Northern Virginia)
- Lynchburg Humane Society
- Middleburg Humane Foundation
- Norfolk Animal Care Center
- Norfolk SPCA
- NoVA Coalition for Animals
- Partners Among Cats and Canines (PACC) (Southampton County)
- PAWS of SWVA
- Peninsula SPCA (Newport News)
- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
- Portsmouth Humane Society
- Reba's Animal Rescue (Hampton Roads)
- Richmond SPCA
- SPCA of Northern Virginia
- Symbiotic, Inc. (Suffolk)
- Virginia Alliance for Animal Shelters
- Virginia Animal Control Association
- Virginia Animal Rights Voters
- Virginia Beach SPCA
- Virginia Federation of Humane Societies
- Wise County Humane Society