

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE COUNCIL OF DOCKED BREEDS

16th October 2002

Proposed docking ban ignores consultation responses

Dog owners have reacted with dismay to an announcement by DEFRA Minister Elliot Morley that he intends to introduce regulations to ban the docking of dogs' tails. The legislation is proposed as part of a new Animal Welfare Bill, and follows a public consultation conducted earlier this year.

However, Mr Morley appears to have paid scant attention to views expressed by those who responded to the consultation process, says the Council of Docked Breeds.

- More than half of the 33 vets who responded on docking said it should not be banned
- All 113 dog breed clubs which responded, representing 12,744 members, said docking should not be banned
- 1590 members of the public commented on docking, 80% of whom opposed a ban on docking

“It is very disappointing indeed that Mr Morley has not taken more seriously the strongly held views of so many dog owners, breeders and veterinarians, and is intent on a ban,” commented Peter Squires, President of the Council of Docked Breeds.

He roundly criticised the ‘scientific’ evidence which DEFRA offered to support a docking ban. The paper, he said, was riddled with inaccuracy and inconsistency. It relied on comparisons with farm animals and highly partisan opinions which had not been subject to proper scientific peer review, and failed even to understand the current law on docking.

However, Mr Squires welcomed the acknowledgement by the Government that there are occasions when tail docking is necessary for welfare reasons.

“Mr Morley has said that these will be dealt with on a case by case basis. We are aware of many cases in which the failure to dock has resulted in serious tail damage, and there will be many situations in which it may be anticipated that dogs will be exposed to potential future trauma which could avoided by docking.

“We will be arguing strongly for the maintenance of the docking option and the right of dog breeders and their veterinary advisers to decide on those breeds and those situations,” said Peter Squires.

No date has been set for the proposed new legislation.

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