

**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT**

**May 22, 2017**

**A.7195 – Zebrowski (In Assembly Agriculture Committee)  
S.5599 – Boyle (On Senate Third Reading Calendar)**

***AN ACT to amend the agriculture and markets law and the general business law, in relation to exempting certain entities from the definition of pet dealer***

This memo in *support* is written on behalf of our client, the New York State Veterinary Medical Society. The New York State Veterinary Medical Society (NYSVMS) is the acknowledged and respected voice for the veterinary medicine profession. The Society's mission is to protect, promote, and advance the science and profession of veterinary medicine in New York State. The NYSVMS works to ensure that New Yorkers have access to the highest caliber veterinary care available in the most cost effective way.

This legislation would exempt municipal pounds and shelters, and societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and other non-profit organizations that transport or offer animals for adoption from the definition of "pet dealer" in the agriculture and markets law. The legislation would further require these exempt organizations to annually register with the Department of Agriculture and Markets.

If enacted, this legislation would be a critical step in creating a regulatory structure for nonprofit organizations that bring animals into New York for adoption. While the vast majority of these organizations do tremendous work, and have the best intentions, they exist in an almost wholly unregulated setting. This legislation would provide a similar regulatory framework that currently exists for municipal shelters and pet dealers. One major advantage to this regulation would be a requirement for an inspection by a licensed veterinarian from the state where the animal is being transported from, which will reduce the number of diseases spread from animal transport, and improve public health.

Further, this legislation will crack down on pet sellers that have taken advantage of lax rules for non-profit pet organizations in New York. Over the past five years, there has been a significant decrease in the number of pet dealers in New York, while there has been a large increase in non-profit animal organizations. Many of these organizations re-incorporate as non-profits to skirt State oversight. This legislation would exclude nonprofits from the definition of pet dealer, but would require registration with the Department of Agriculture and Markets for exempt organizations, providing proper oversight.

For the reasons stated above, we **support** this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

**JACKSON LEWIS P.C.**