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Sessional Paper No. P-160

P-160 Animal Cruelty (Sessional Paper No. P-160) Mr. McDonell. (Tabled June 13, 2012)

Response:

The McGuinty government has clamped down on animal abusers by updating and strengthening the *Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) Act* for the first time in nearly a century. These revisions were proclaimed into force on March 1, 2009. The texts of the new legislation and its regulations are publicly available.

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services takes the issue of animal welfare very seriously, which is why we moved forward with the new law, one that gives Ontario the strongest animal welfare legislation in Canada.

Since 1919, the *OSPCA Act* has authorized OSPCA inspectors and agents to enforce any law in Ontario pertaining to the welfare of animals. Police may also enforce these laws.

Please be assured that this ministry will continue to support a strong and effective animal welfare system in Ontario.

The revised *OSPCA Act* includes standards of care applicable to all animals including those kept by breeders. There is accompanying inspection authority for the OSPCA for premises where animals are kept for exhibit, entertainment, boarding, hire, or sale, which would include breeding operations. There is also a provincial offence for failing to comply with those standards in addition to other offences including causing or permitting distress to animals. The OSPCA and police may also enforce relevant provisions of the *Criminal Code*.

In addition, under the *Municipal Act 2001*, a municipality may pass bylaws pertaining to animals and may prohibit or license a business within its jurisdiction while imposing licensing conditions. Under the *OSPCA Act*, if local bylaws pertain to animal welfare, they may be enforced by the OSPCA.

The new legislation has proven to be an effective tool for the OSPCA to deal with unscrupulous breeders who run substandard operations known as "mills".

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Madeleine Meilleur".

Madeleine Meilleur
Minister