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# **CLEVELAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Sam Lockridge  
Cleveland County Health Department  
704-447-8204  
[sam.lockridge@clevelandcounty.com](mailto:sam.lockridge@clevelandcounty.com)

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## **Cleveland County Board of Commissioners Pass Ordinance to Prevent Abuse of Animals**

*Ordinance establishes standards of care for large commercial cat and dog breeding facilities*

(Shelby, NC)—During a public hearing held at the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners meeting on Tuesday, February 3, 2015, County Commissioners passed an amendment to Article I of Chapter 3 of the Cleveland County Code Ordinances that establishes standards of care for large commercial cat and dog breeding facilities in the county. The intent of this amendment is to assist in the prevention of abuse of animals that are used for commercial breeding purposes.

The ordinance now defines a large dog or cat breeder as any person who owns, has custody of, or maintains 10 or more female dogs or cats over the age of six (6) months that are capable of reproduction and kept primarily for the purpose of breeding and selling the offspring as pets. Breeders who fit this definition will be held to certain standards of care to help ensure proper treatment of their pets. Some of these standards include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Exercise on a daily basis outside the animal's primary enclosure
- Fresh food and water daily
- Appropriate veterinary care, including routine and preventive care
- Appropriate and prompt treatment or attention to any deviation in health

The ordinance also sets standards for the enclosure in which the pets are kept. Several examples of such standards for enclosures include:

- Does not cause injury to dog or cat
- Protects the dog or cat from extreme weather conditions
- Is large enough so that dog or cat can sit, stand, lie down or turn around comfortably without overcrowding
- Is maintained in a sanitary manner
- Has solid flooring that provides solid footing
- No more than four (4) dogs or cats may be housed in the same primary enclosure without supervision

All Cleveland County breeders fitting the definition of a large dog or cat breeder must register with Cleveland County Animal Control, complete an annual application, and pay an annual registration fee of fifty dollars. All breeders will be subject to annual and random inspections by Cleveland County Animal Control to ensure compliance with the established standards. Failure to comply with the established standards constitutes a Class 3 misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$100 per animal.

This ordinance is not intended to place numerical limits on the number of dogs and/or cats a person may own or to regulate a person's ownership of cats and/or dogs when they are not used for breeding and selling of offspring. Furthermore, this ordinance does not apply to kennels that are used solely for boarding cats and/or dogs or for training them for hunting, field trials or shows. The intent of this ordinance is to establish standards of care for large commercial cat and dog breeders in an effort to prevent the mistreatment and abuse of these animals.

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