



LAKE COUNTY
Investing in People
and Our Communities

Proposed Lake County Pet Breeder License - Update

Health and Community Services Committee
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Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License

- Go Humane Lake County (GHLC) Request
- Current Regulations
- Unwanted Pets Statistics
- Fiscal Concerns
- Effectiveness

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License:

Go Humane Lake County Request

- GHLC, a group of “*concerned citizens, advocates, rescuers, and tax payers united behind a humane cause*” is urging Lake County to adopt ordinance requirements for a pet breeder license
 - Drafted and provided a model ordinance for consideration
- GHLC’s goal is to “*end the **pet overpopulation** in our communities*”
- GHLC is concerned that the “***ever-increasing** amount of homeless pets is a burden on the tax payers of Lake County, and a humane issue for our communities*”

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License:

Current Regulations

- Breeders are currently licensed and regulated by the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA), but ***only*** when they have ***more than 5 female dogs or cats that are “capable of reproduction”***
- “Hobby” and “Backyard” breeders who have 5 or fewer females are not regulated by IDOA
- Chapter 172 of the Lake County Code of Ordinances limits the number of dogs and cats a person may have to 4 of each, however animals 6 months of age and younger are exempt from the requirement

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License:

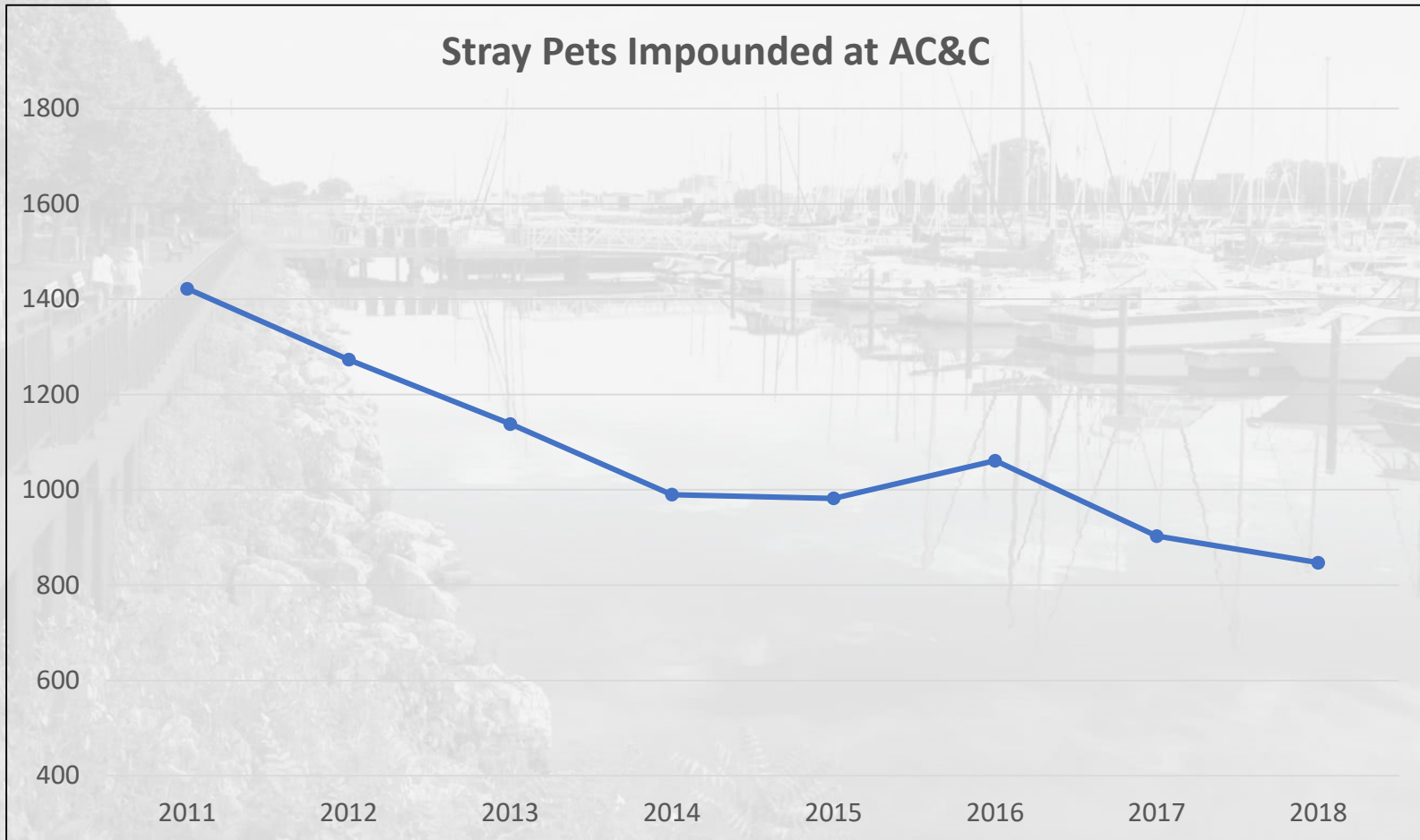
Unwanted Pets

- Lake County Health Department (LCHD) collects data on “unwanted pets” in the County, which includes:
 - Strays impounded
 - Pets relinquished by owners
 - Pets euthanized
 - Pets referred for adoption
- Animal Care and Control (AC&C) data indicates a **significant decline** in these numbers between 2011 and 2018

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License: *Unwanted Pets*

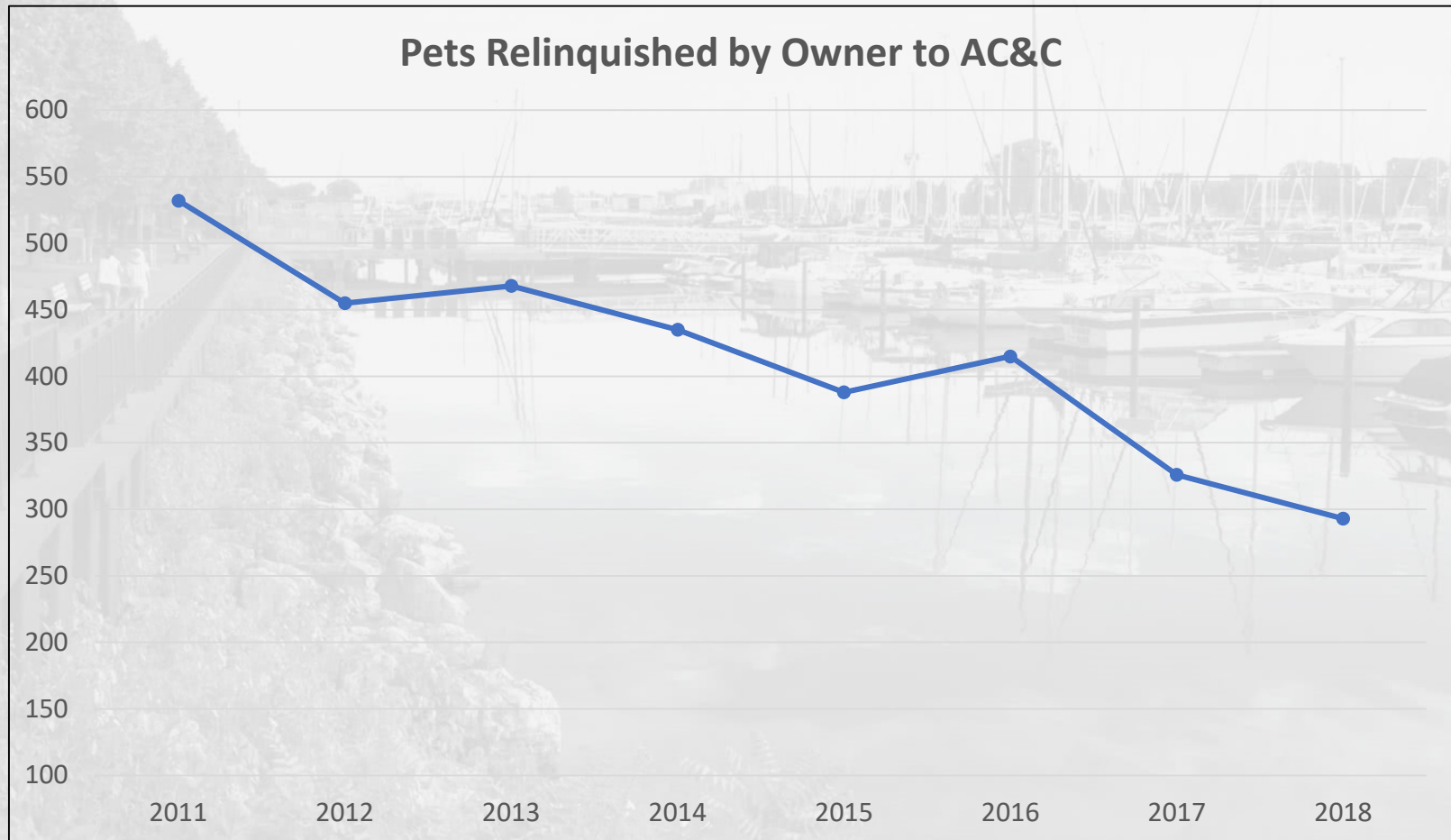
- Between 2011 and 2018:
 - Strays impounded **decreased by 40%**
 - Pets relinquished by owners **decreased by 45%**
 - Pets euthanized **decreased by 55%**
 - Pets referred for adoption **decreased by 48%**

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License: *Unwanted Pets*

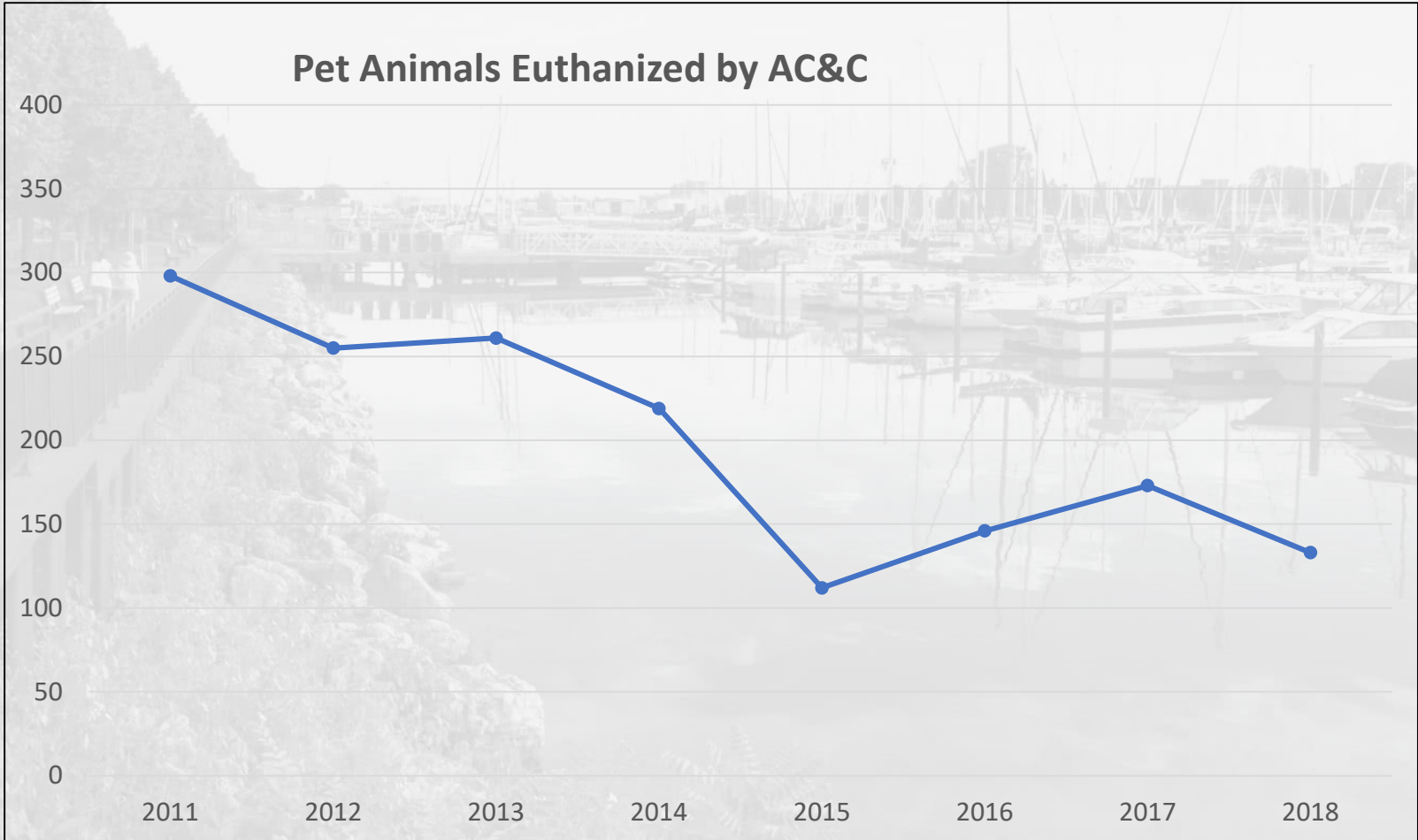


Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License:

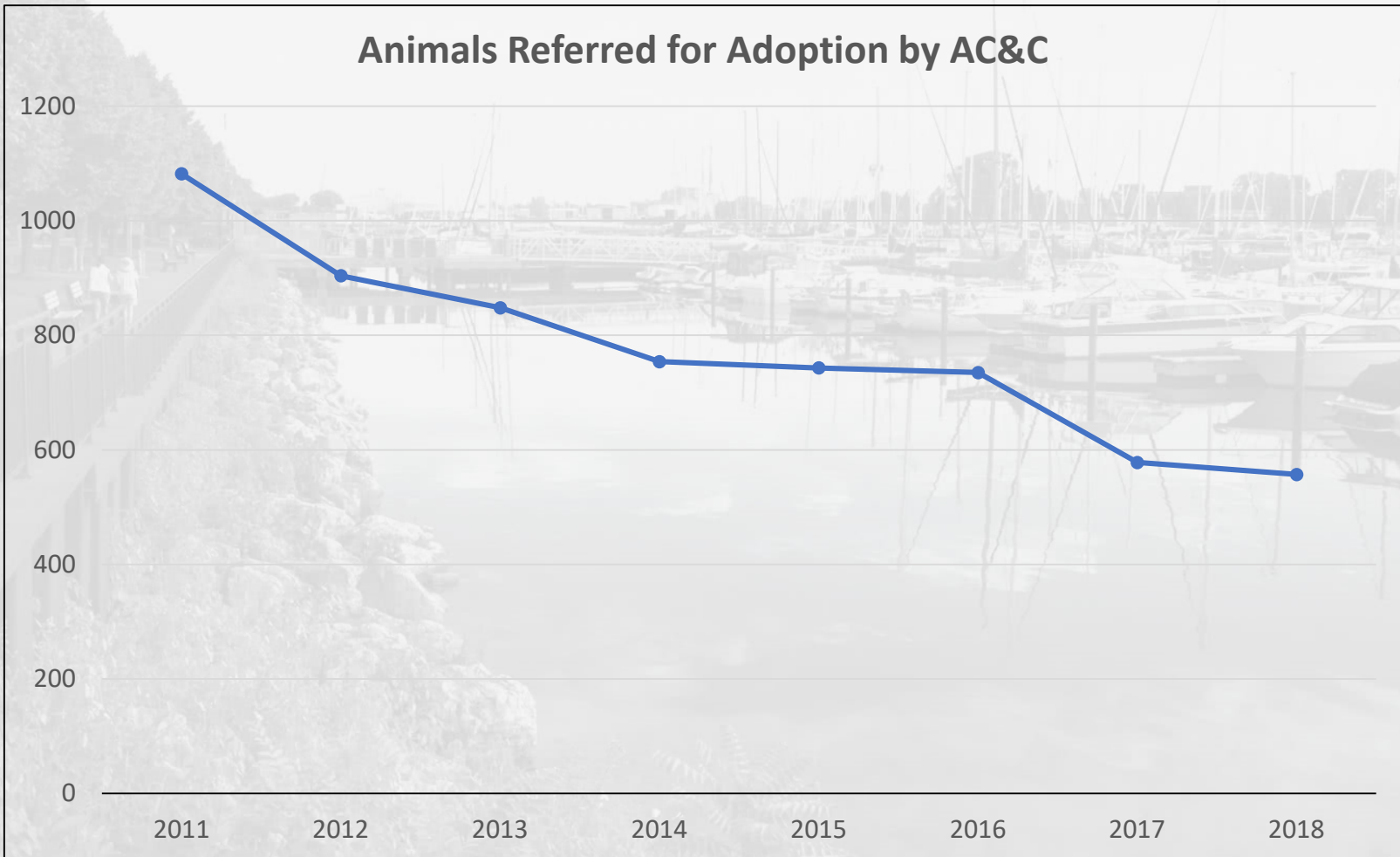
Unwanted Pets



Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License: *Unwanted Pets*



Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License: *Unwanted Pets*



Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License:

Unwanted Pets

- AC&C's main adoption partner is Orphans of the Storm (OOTS):
 - The animals AC&C provides to OOTS **are currently not enough to meet their adoption demand**
 - To meet the demand, OOTS imports animals from out-of-state shelters on a weekly basis

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License:

Fiscal Concerns

- GHLC is concerned that “...the County is sending hundreds of animals every year to Orphans of the Storm, at a cost of \$25 per animal. If we include only cats and dogs, that adds up to approximately \$66,000 over 3 years”
- The current transfer fee paid by AC&C to OOTS is \$50 per animal
 - The amount was adjusted from \$25 to \$50 in 2018
- To offset these costs, AC&C collects a fee of \$50 for each owner relinquished animal

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License:

Fiscal Concerns

- 522 pets were sent to OOTS for adoption in 2018
- Approximately ***55% of the pets that AC&C refers for adoption are relinquished by owners*** who have paid the \$50 fee
- AC&C does not collect a fee for impounded (and not returned) stray pets, however:
 - Picking up and impounding strays is a mandated service of AC&C
 - The cost for the stray pets comes from other fees (registration and violation fees), **NOT TAX DOLLARS**

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License: *Fiscal Concerns*

- GHLC has stated: *“The [proposed] licensing fees reflect the approximate costs to create, enforce and maintain the program. The expectation being that once the program is up and running, the fees would also help fund discounted spay and neuter programs for Lake County residents, further reducing the number of unwanted pets.”*
- AC&C does not have a reliable estimate of the likely number of licenses that would be issued, so there is no way to estimate how much revenue would be expected
- For reference, the City of Waukegan implemented a breeder license requirement in 2012, with a license fee of \$25

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License: *Effectiveness*

- Between **2012 and 2018**, the City of Waukegan has issued ***two licenses*** to breeders
- During that time the number of dogs impounded by the City of Waukegan ***decreased by 30%***
- Over that same period of time, the number of dogs impounded by Lake County AC&C has ***decreased by 36% without*** a breeder license requirement

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License: *Effectiveness*

- GHLC has stated: *“We believe that by enacting an ordinance that would close the loopholes that currently allows unlicensed breeding and selling of animals in unincorporated Lake County...”*
- Breeding and selling pets in unincorporated Lake County ***on a regular basis*** (i.e., operating a pet breeding and selling business) is already prohibited by the Unified Development Ordinance in residential-zoned districts
 - These breeding and selling operations can be addressed by enforcing existing zoning regulations

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License: *Effectiveness*

- GHLC has stated: *“This ordinance will separate the reputable “hobby breeders” from the disreputable “backyard breeders” and provide the mechanism necessary to stop the repeat offenders. A fine of \$1,500 dollars per animal sold without a license is recommended.”*
- “Reputable hobby breeders” seem most likely to comply with the \$500 license requirement proposed by GHLC, though these breeders are not the primary target of the regulation
- “Backyard breeders” would very likely **not** voluntarily comply with the license requirement

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License: *Effectiveness*

- If non-compliant “backyard breeders” were found to be breeding without a license, the ordinance as proposed would impose a fine of \$1,500 per animal **and** require that they obtain a \$500 license
 - These cases would be very difficult to prove because the court would require records of the transactions or testimony of those involved
 - Breeders would almost certainly refuse entry into their homes or to turn over records
 - Courts would be very unlikely to issue warrants to obtain this evidence

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License: *Effectiveness*

- The license and violation requirements would also apply to pet owners whose dogs or cats have an ***unplanned or unexpected litter*** that they wish to sell
- An unplanned litter of 6 dogs or cats:
 - Would cause the owner of the pets to apply and pay for a \$500 breeder license
 - Could result in a fine of \$9,000

Exploring the Need for a Lake County Pet Breeder License: *Effectiveness*

- Many provisions in the GHLC proposed ordinance are vague and/or unenforceable, for example:
 - There are no due process provisions in the ordinance for revocation of a license
 - There are no inspection provisions
 - AC&C has no means to obtain this information or enforce these provisions: *“No person who has been charged with or convicted of (a) a domestic violence offense, or (b) any animal related offense or crime, shall be granted a breeder’s license or be allowed to reside on the premises where a breeder’s license has been issued.”*



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QUESTIONS?
