

ANIMAL ADVOCATES OF PEARL RIVER COUNTY

Petition background and summary:

Articles in the Picayune Item and Poplarville Democrat of February 2014 included that the Board of Supervisors and county officials recognized “the need for a stronger animal control ordinance and state law to protect the welfare of all animals in Pearl River County.” Supervisor Sandy Smith, and Director of Planning and Development, Ed Pinero, stated the “**state law is very vague on the definition of neglect and shelter.**” Additionally, Chief Deputy Shane Tucker of the Pearl River County Sheriff’s Department stated that the department “would like to see a county animal control officer hired because deputies respond daily to animal calls and spend a lot of time on animal cases.”

Further, in Mississippi, **the current animal cruelty law considers the abuse and/or neglect of several animals concurrently as only one count of animal abuse. For instance, an individual could starve 17 dogs, but it would be considered only one count of cruelty.**

We are petitioning the county and state to enact the following ordinances/laws regarding animal care and cruelty:

1. The definition of shelter to include a permanent structure with a slanted, waterproof roof, a solid floor that is elevated off the ground, four sides that adequately protect from extremes of temperature, sun, rain, sleet, or snow, room for the animal to comfortably stand and lie in a normal manner, and preferably clean, dry straw for bedding. Further, during a “hard freeze warning” that animals are provided with extra protection preferably by being brought into an indoor space, or provided with a covering over the door of the shelter and several additional inches of dry straw for bedding.
2. Language that includes that any animal that is tethered have easy access to the above described shelter and that the current law requiring the length of the tether to be five times the length of the body be enforced. The tethered animal should be able to comfortably maneuver its body in a normal manner.
3. A change in the current law to include that an animal abuser is charged for ONE count of animal abuse for EACH animal abused.
4. Provision for the hiring of a ***specifically trained, knowledgeable, competent***, Animal Control Officer.

Animal Advocates of Pearl River County

We, the undersigned wish to make known our desire for the following ordinances/laws affecting animals, **as outlined in the petition summary**, to be enacted: 1. Shelter defined as a permanent structure. 2. Enforcement of the current tethering law. 3. ONE count of animal abuse is charged for EACH animal abused. 4. The position of Animal Control Officer is filled by a properly trained individual.

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