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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of Secondhand Hounds to express our support for House File 208 and Senate File 73.

Secondhand Hounds is a foster-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit companion animal rescue that serves many communities throughout the State of Minnesota, including urban, suburban, rural, and tribal communities. We rescue animals from across Minnesota, as well as states through the United States, especially those with high kill shelters. Not only are we an animal rescue, but we also have one of the first nonprofit veterinary centers in Minnesota, the Secondhand Hounds Veterinary Center. Recently, Secondhand Hounds acquired another nonprofit, People & Pets Together, and we currently run the first pet food shelf in the Twin Cities. We are always looking at rescue in a holistic way, and we aim to keep pets with their families, and when that is not possible, to find them wonderful homes.

Secondhand Hounds is the largest animal rescue in Minnesota based on revenue. Since we started in 2009, we have seen an incredible “boom” of rescues cropping up all over Minnesota. Although this is amazing in many ways, there are some worries that come along with the many unregulated nonprofits popping up.

We believe that the only way rescue will continue to be a viable, well-received industry is if there is more oversight and regulation. We believe establishment of the Companion Animal Board is absolutely essential to provide proper oversight of all animal rescue organizations in Minnesota. Currently, there is no state agency in Minnesota with the knowledge, expertise, and qualifications to understand the needs of pets and rescue organizations. After learning about the Board of Animal Health and how their board operates, it became apparent that they (admittedly) do not have the capacity or resources to take on this immense job. I believe we need the Companion Animal Board to work collaboratively with nonprofits, local governments, and the private sector on other issues, including leading discussions and coordination of services for companion animals such as statewide spay-neuter services, access to affordable veterinary care, animal shelter management, and much more.

Minnesotans care deeply about their companion animals. It is why we have been able to be so successful. But in order to continue to be successful as a rescue community, I wholeheartedly believe we need a group of people with specific expertise, resources, and time to commit to companion animal care throughout Minnesota. The Companion Animal Board can be just that.

Secondhand Hounds respectfully asks you to support the Companion Animal Board bill, HF 208 / SF 73.

Thank you,
Rachel Mairose
Executive Director & Founder, Secondhand Hounds
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cc: Representative Sandra Erickson 15A
Senator Andrew Mathews 15