



March 16, 2020

### **Open Letter to Federal, State & Local Government Officials Regarding Pets and COVID-19 Precautions**

We in the responsible pet care community are extremely concerned by the threat to human health posed by the rapidly evolving coronavirus pandemic, and commend the swift actions you and your peers across the country are taking to safeguard the population. As you take defensive steps by directing event cancellations and facility closures in order to create social distances that will help control the spread of disease, we urge you to also consider the well-being of the pets and other animals loved by the citizens in your communities.

According to the 2019-2020 APPA National Pet Owners Survey, 67% of American households (84.9 million) own at least one pet. 95% of pet owners consider their pets to be part of the family. It is vital that businesses that provide products or services for the care of pets, and those that house animals, are included among the critical infrastructure that is allowed to remain open throughout the crisis. Just as grocery stores and hospitals provide necessary sustenance and medical care to humans, pet stores that sell food, products and supplies and businesses that offer veterinary and boarding services must remain operational to ensure the continued humane care of animals.

Pet stores supply nearly one-third of all dog and cat food needed by the pet-owning population; that number is much higher for food required by other pets like small mammals, reptiles and fish. Grocery stores that may be allowed to remain open generally only offer limited pet food options and they don't always have the specialized food, supplements and even medication that are required to maintain the health of millions of beloved pets and animals nationwide—nor are they set up logistically to serve ALL pets in this country. Grocery stores alone cannot fulfill the demand and animals would needlessly suffer.

Additionally, many national and local retail pet supply stores also offer veterinary care and pet boarding services on site. Forcing these stores to close in many cases will also shut down access to veterinary care, veterinary pet diets, and a dependable facility to temporarily house pets in that community.

It should be noted that pet stores which house and care for animals, such as puppies, kittens, small animals, birds, reptiles and fish, must remain operational to at least a limited degree so that staff can take appropriate care of the animals housed there. Since staff will need to be on site regardless of whether or not the store is open, it makes sense to allow them to provide pet owners with necessary food and care items.

You are already taking important measures necessary to protect the most vulnerable members of our society, including the elderly and the immunocompromised. **We ask you to also ensure that your community has the ability to provide appropriate care for the pets and animals that depend on them, and list pet stores as essential retailers that are exempt from any mandatory closures.**

If you have any questions or need additional information, we in the responsible pet care community stand ready to help you safeguard both human and animal health and well-being.

Sincerely,

Mike Bober, President and CEO, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council

Dana Brooks, President and CEO, Pet Food Institute

Steve King, CEO, American Pet Products Association

Vic Mason, President, World Pet Association

Celeste Powers, President, Pet Industry Distributors Association

Al Puntillo, Steering Committee Chair, Independent & Neighborhood Pet Retail Association

Retailer Community:

Ron Coughlin, CEO, Petco

J.K. Symancyk, President & CEO, PetSmart

Chris McCurdy, Interim President, PetSmart Charities

Joe Watson, President and CEO, Petland

Chris Rowland, CEO, Pet Supplies Plus

Michael Levy, Founder and President, and Mark Witriol, Co-Owner, Pet Food Express

Lars & Marisa Wulff, Co-CEO's, Mud Bay

Richard Maltsbarger, President & CEO, Pet Valu & Pet Supermarket

Lindsay Mutschler, CFO, Concord Pet Foods and Supplies

Mike and Trish Elkind, Founders, and Carrie McDermott, CEO, PetPeople

Jeff David, CEO, Independent Pet Partners

Paul Allen, Founder and CEO, Woof Gang Bakery

Joe Dent, President, and Monica Pitzner, Chief Marketing Officer, Three Dog Bakery

Michael Seitz, CEO & Chairman, Earthwise Pet

Bill Trufant, President, B & B Pet Stop, Inc., Mobile, AL

Daughtry Perritt, Owner, Pet Depot LLC, Florence, AL

Keith Evans, Owner, Petland Montgomery, Montgomery, AL

Samantha Boyle, Owner, Petland Rogers, Rogers, AR

Frank Mineo, Owner, Animal Kingdom, Phoenix, AZ

Becci Scott, Owner, Fetching Dog, Scottsdale, AZ

Vicki Mineo, Owner, Puppies n' Love, Phoenix, AZ

George Richter, Owner, Dog Dog Cat, South Lake Tahoe, CA

Andrew T. Kim, Founder & CEO, healthspot, Culver City, CA

Kristin Dutton, Director of Merchandising, Kahoots Feed and Pet, Ramona, CA

Mike Lemos, Owner, Lemos Feed and Pet Supply, San Luis Obispo, CA

David Sidhu, Owner, Self Serve Pet Spa (Pet Food), Bakersfield, CA

Kim Everett, Owner, The Perfect Parrot, North Hollywood, CA

Justin & Susanna Furlone, Owners, The Wishbone Pet Company, Freedom, CA

Marvin Schaffer, Owner/General Manager, J & M Aquatics & Pet Center, Grand Junction, CO

Dustin Haworth, Owner, Pet City, Colorado Springs, CO

Tara Fleming, Owner, AtoZ Pet Shop, Orange, CT

Jared Pinsker, Chief Executive Officer and President, Best Friends Pet Hotel, Norwalk, CT

Laura Reid, President, FishMart, West Haven, CT

Peter Noel, President, Gentle Jungle Pet Store Inc, Meriden, CT

Jennifer Scott, Owner, The Pawprint Market, Darien, CT

Robin Kershner, Founder, Huxley & Kent, Washington, DC

Heidi & Sean Potter, Owners, American Dog Outfitters, Key West, FL

Emily Soft, Manager, Animal House Naturals, St. Petersburg, FL  
Debra C. Lange, Owner, Benson's Canine Cookies, Lakeland, FL  
Nancy Okun, Owner, Cats n Dogs, Port Charlotte, FL  
Dr. James B. Wood, Coral Sea Aquarium, West Palm Beach, FL  
Douglas Ward, President, Geo Global Partners (OASE Aquatics and biOrb brands), West Palm Beach, FL  
Michael Selk, VP of Operations and Engineering, Geo Global Partners (OASE Aquatics and biOrb brands),  
West Palm Beach, FL  
Tricia Bolds, President/CEO, Gulf Coast Pet Supplies, Inc., Sarasota, FL  
Kendra Conze, Owner, Health Muttt, LLC, Tampa, FL  
Alexandre Karfunkelstein Lima, Owner, Hollywood Houndz Boutique, Spa & Hotel, Lake Mary, FL  
Andrea Passuello de Freitas, Owner/Manager, Le Pup Pet Supplies and Grooming, Clermont, FL  
Patrick McGinnis, CEO, Leo & Lucky's, Parrish, FL  
William & Cindy Rein, Owners, Luke's Natural Pet Market, Coral Springs, FL  
Alan Garson, Palm Beach Puppies, Boca Raton, FL  
Holly Elassaad, Owner, Pet Nation, Navarre, FL  
Stephen Benecke, Owner, Petland Bradenton, Bradenton, FL  
Luis Marquez, President/Owner, Petland Davie, Petland Largo, Petland Miami, Petland Naples,  
Petland Pembroke Pines, Petland Plantation, FL  
Kelli Daniels, Owner, Petland Jacksonville, Jacksonville, FL  
Brad Parker, Owner, Petland Sarasota, Sarasota, FL  
Adrian Archie, Owner, petNmind, Coconut Creek, FL  
Paul Lewis, Owner, The Green K9, Mount Dora, FL  
Ben & Lisa Prakobkit, Owners, The Modern Paws, Tampa, FL  
Jennifer Fadal, Founder/Owner, Wag the Dog Incorporated, Tampa, FL  
Dottie DeCarlo, Owner, Woof Gang Bakery - Lakewood Ranch, Lakewood Ranch, FL  
Peggy Williams, Owner, Backyard Pet Boutique, Rome, GA  
Joann Schwartz, Owner, Bark & Lounge Doggy Day Care & Boarding, Atlanta, GA  
Darla Spinnato, Owner, Camp Bow Wow Alpharetta, Alpharetta, GA  
Peter Grossman, Managing Member/Owner, Camp Woof Companies, Norcross, GA  
Renee Palmer, Founder, CEO, CityDog Market, Atlanta, GA  
Mecca Fox, Owner, Diggin' It, Rome, GA  
Toni Barry, Highland Pet Supply, Atlanta, GA  
Ian Awbrey, Highland Pet Supply, Atlanta, GA  
Richard & Edgardo Lott, Owners, Pause 4 Paws Pet Grooming and Hotel, Douglasville, GA  
Brad Parker, Owner, Petland Kennesaw, Kennesaw, GA  
Kristen Parker, Owner, Petland Mall of Georgia, Buford, GA  
Monte Brokate, Owner/Franchisee, Petland of Dalton, Petland of Rome, GA  
Tim Green, Owner, Sandy Pawz, Brunswick, GA  
David and Marilyn Crabb, Owners, The Stock Market, Conyers, GA  
Eileen Kelly, Owner, The Whole Dog Market, Atlanta, GA  
Jean Finney, Owner, The Whole Dog Market, Atlanta, GA  
Judy Erlichman, Owner, Wags to Whiskers, LLC, Peachtree City, GA  
Carol Young, Owner, Wags to Whiskers, LLC, Peachtree City, GA  
Ron & Wendy Solsrud, Owners, Petland Iowa City, Iowa City, IA  
Michael & Barbara Morris, President and Co-Owner, Treats on a Leash LLC, Ames, IA  
Kayla Kerr, Owner, Puppyland, Meridian, ID  
Leslie Corral, 4 Legs Pet, Chicago, IL  
Mark and Caroline Janczak, President and Secretary, Critters Pet Shop Inc., South Elgin, IL

Beth Staley, Owner, Happy Dog Barkery, Downers Grove, IL  
James Horne, Co-Owner, Jameson Loves Danger, Chicago, IL  
Gracie Whalen, Co-Owner, Jameson Loves Danger, Chicago, IL  
Liz Varela, Owner, Liz's Pet Shop, Chicago, IL  
Angie DeMars, Owner, Noah's Ark Pet Supply, Winnetka, IL  
Douglas E. Gronowski, Owner, Orland Park Boarding Kennel & Natural Pet Food Center, Orland Park, IL  
Jim Sparks, Owner, Park Pet Shop Inc., Chicago, IL  
Candace D'Agnolo, Founder & CEO, Pet Boss Nation, Chicago, IL  
Carl Swanson, Owner, Petland Chicago Ridge, Petland Naperville, Petland Rockford, IL  
Adam Berger, Owner, Petland Round Lake Beach, Round Lake Beach, IL  
Sophie Phillips, Owner, Sprocket & Stone, Chicago, IL  
Phillip Emigh, Owner, Tails in the City, Chicago, IL  
Bruce Haas, Owner, Tails in the City, Chicago, IL  
Madeline Rannin, Owner, The Groom Wizard, Yorkville, IL  
AdreAnne & Andy Tesene, Owners, Two Bostons, Naperville, Wheaton, Burr Ridge, Geneva, IL  
Matt Smallheer, President, Tye-Dyed Iguana, Fairview Heights, IL  
Janelle Pitula, Owner, Wags to Whiskers, Plainfield, IL  
Brandi Calvert, Physical Therapist Assistant and Certified Dog Trainer, Wags to Whiskers, Plainfield, IL  
Brad Cantwell, President, MidWest Homes for Pets, Muncie, IN  
Cindy Dunston Quirk, Founder and Chief Dog Lover, Scout & Zoe's, Anderson, IN  
Samantha Youngblood, Owner, Youngblood's Natural Animal Care Center & Massage Therapy,  
Greenfield, IN  
Jennifer Thomas, Owner, Lucky Dog Outfitters and Pet Supply, Lawrence, KS  
Staci Williams, Owner, Petland Topeka, Topeka, KS  
Rebecca Hertel, Owner, Petland West Wichita, West Wichita, KS  
Brannon Dixon, CEO, Feeders Supply/ Chow Hound Pet Supplies, Louisville, KY  
Leslie Stewart, Owner, Southern Barker, Lexington and Louisville, KY  
Robert Schenk, Owner, Animal Instincts Aquarium & Pet Center, Fall River, MA  
Nicoll Vincent, Owner, For K-9s & Felines, LLC, Westfield, MA  
Rob Mellace, Owner, Healthy Pet, Peabody, MA  
Stephen Varner, Owner, Maggie's Foods for Pets, West Boylston, MA  
Andrew Gaouette, Owner, Mutt Waggin' Pet Supplies, Medfield, MA  
Rob Mellace, Owner, Pet Express, Lynn, MA and Braintree, MA  
Lucia Mellace-Castle, Owner, Pet Express, Danvers, MA  
John Mellace, Owner, Pet Express, Saugus, MA  
Carlos Munoz, President, The Perfect Puppy, Plainville, MA  
Tiffany Lynn Higgins, Owner, The Spa at Tiffany's Pet Grooming & Boutique, Hinsdale, MA  
Mitch Thomson, Just Puppies, Inc., Rockville, MD  
Jeanea Thomson, Just Puppies, Inc., Towson, MD  
Susanna Brennan, Owner, Scratch and Sniff Pet Supplies, Phoenix, MD  
Helen Bennett, Owner, The Grooming Place Pet Shop, Chester, MD  
Joseph W. Wagner, Jr., Owner, Today's Pet, Inc., Elkridge, MD  
Ann Peterson, Owner, Ann-imals Pet Supply Store, York, ME  
Heidi V. Neal, Owner, Loyal Biscuit Company, Rockland, ME  
Bill Backus, President, A&M Aquatics, Lansing, MI  
Joel DeBruin, CEO, John A VanDenBosch Co., Holland, MI  
Gary Albert, Owner, Ruff Life Pet Outfitters, Petosky, MI  
John Stottele, LLC Member/Owner, The Family Puppy, Troy, Novi and Flint, MI

Kristin Smith, Owner, Four Paws and a Tail, Blaine, MN  
Michelle Lynn Nelson, Owner, The Pet Authority, Albert Lea and Austin, MN  
Doug Pasternack, Franchisee, Petland Blue Springs and Petland North Kansas City, MO  
Ryan Boyle, Owner, Petland Joplin, Joplin, MO  
Thomas Killmade, Owner, Petland St. Louis, Saint Louis, MO  
Chris Fleming, Owner, Pinnacle Pet, Neosho, MO  
Chase Pierce, Owner, Tailwaggers Montana, Whitefish, MT  
Heather Persinger, Owner/General Manager, Aristopets Pet Food & Supplies, Lewisville, NC  
Phil Ray, Owner/President, Best 4K9, Greensboro, Oak Ridge and Winston Salem, NC  
Heather McClain-Howell, Owner/Operator, Fit for a Pit, Kinston, NC  
Scott Wildman, Vice President, Pawsitively Pampered Pets, Huntersville, NC  
Todd Shelton, CEO, Phillips Pet Food & Supplies, Charlotte, NC  
Laura Backus, Owner, Purrfect Bark, Columbus, NC  
Benjamin Mayes, General Manager, Claremont Pet & Aquarium Center, Claremont, NH,  
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Lacie Hyde, Owner, Bark Avenue Puppies, Red Bank, NJ  
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Cindy Knowles, Co-Owner, Furrylicious, Whitehouse Station, NJ  
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Jeff Morton, Owner, Shake a Paw, Union, NJ  
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Billy Shinn, CEO/Owner, NY Puppy Club, Flushing, NY  
Howard Lee, General Manager, NY Puppy Club, Flushing, NY  
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Douglas Staley, Owner, Pet Palace of New City, New City, NY  
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Joseph Manzi, President, Total Pet Care, Holbrook, NY  
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Christine Rokey, Owner, Treat Your Pet SC, LLC, Myrtle Beach, SC  
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Patricia Carter, Owner, Patti's Pet Depot, Houston, TX  
Joshua Nie, General Manager, Petland Frisco, Frisco, TX  
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Jay and Grace Suk, Owners, Petland of Dallas, Dallas, TX  
Luis Marquez, President/Owner, Petland Tyler, Tyler, TX  
Kathleen & Brian Evett, Owners, The Upper Paw, Dallas, TX  
Christy Howard, Owner, Three Dog Bakery Texas, Fort Worth, TX  
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Kelly Ross, Franchise Owner, Woof Gang Bakery & Grooming The Woodlands, Tomball, TX  
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Kevin Eddy, Owner/President, Pet Food Warehouse / Vermont Pet Food & Supply, So. Burlington, VT  
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Keri Torgerson, Owner, Mac's Pet Depot Barkery, Milwaukee, WI  
Adam Berger, Owner, Petland Racine, Racine, WI