



January 13, 2015

Mary Travis Bassett, MD, MPH
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Gotham Center, 42-09 28th Street – CN 31
Long Island, NY 11101-4132

Re: Animals (Article 161) and Reportable Diseases and Conditions (Article 11) Proposed Rules

Dear Commissioner Bassett:

I am a licensed veterinarian with the state of Connecticut. I have treated domestic ferrets my entire career and believe they are wonderful companion animals when the owners are educated about their care and needs. I also have personally owned ferrets for over 25 years.

I support allowing spayed and neutered ferrets in New York City, and support the annual rabies vaccination requirement.

I do not support the sale of ferrets in pet stores. Store clerks do not adequately explain to prospective owners a ferret's specific needs, habits, and proper veterinary care. Ferrets are not guinea pigs or hamsters and as such should not be caged 24 hours a day. They are a pet comparable to cats in their intelligence and dietary needs (obligate meat eater) and dogs for their social needs (needing others to play and interact with daily). They require yearly vaccinations (rabies and canine distemper) and yearly examinations with a veterinarian.

I recommend that ferrets only be sold or adopted with a valid rabies vaccination not given before 12 weeks of age and age-appropriate canine distemper vaccinations, both of which are only effective for 1 year. Vaccinating ferrets not only protect the human population against rabies but also dogs from canine distemper exposure.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Della Farney, DVM
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