



BRIAN E. FROSH, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

PRESS RELEASE

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Attorney General Frosh Announces Charges Against Two Retail Pet Stores

Charges Allege Violations of the No More Puppy-Mills Act and the Maryland Consumer Protection Act

BALTIMORE, MD— Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that his Consumer Protection Division has [filed charges](#) against Just Puppies of Maryland, Inc. and Just Puppies, Inc. (Just Puppies), two retail pet stores in Rockville and Towson respectively, that sell puppies to consumers in Maryland. Mitchell Thomson, the owner of both stores, was also charged. Just Puppies is charged with selling puppies to consumers in violation of the No More Puppy-Mills Act and the Consumer Protection Act.

The Puppy Mill Act prohibits the offer for sale of cats and dogs by retail pet stores. The Maryland legislature passed the Act in 2018, with an effective date of January 1, 2020, in response to reports that the then-existing regulatory scheme was not sufficient to curb sourcing of animals from “puppy mills” and prevent the mistreatment of animals.

According to [the Statement of Charges](#), in February 2020, Just Puppies shifted to an appointment-only model, but continued to sell puppies to consumers even after the No More Puppy-Mills Act’s effective date, and misled consumers about its relationship with the sources of some of the puppies it sold.

“The intent of the legislature in passing the Puppy Mill Act was clear,” said Attorney General Frosh. “Simply shifting to an appointment-only sales model does not exempt stores from this law that was designed to curb the sourcing of animals from irresponsible breeders.”

The Division alleges that Just Puppies is selling puppies in violation of the No More Puppy-Mills Act’s prohibition against retail pet stores offering dogs for sale to consumers. A violation of the Puppy Mill Act is also considered an unfair or deceptive trade practice under Maryland’s Consumer Protection Act. In addition to the alleged illegal sales, the Division has also charged the stores and their owner with misleading consumers when they represented to consumers that the stores only bought puppies from breeders they knew directly, when, in fact, the Division alleges that the stores also purchased puppies from breeders with whom they had no direct relationship.

The Division is seeking an injunction, as well as monetary relief that may include restitution, penalties, and the costs of the action for the alleged violations of Maryland's No More Puppy-Mills Act and Consumer Protection Act. A hearing has been set for September 13, 2021, at the Office of Administrative Hearings, 11101 Gilroy Rd, Hunt Valley, MD 21031.

Consumers with complaints against Just Puppies of Maryland, Inc., Just Puppies, Inc., or Mitchell Thomson may call the Consumer Protection Division at (410) 576-6569, or write to the Consumer Protection Division at 200 St. Paul Place, 16th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2021/061721.pdf>