

The Case For Prohibiting the Sale of Puppies, Kittens and Bunnies Bred in Mills From Denver Pet Stores



Denver City Council – August 4, 2025

“Buying a pet from a pet store contributes to pet overpopulation and displaces a home for a local shelter animal in need.” --Quote from Denver Animal Shelter

Adoptable dog – A420299

**“Prune”, 2 year old
Lhasa Apso,
male/neutered/vaccinated/
microchipped**

Current adoption fee: \$75
Located at: Denver Animal Shelter

“I have been at the Shelter since
July 28, 2025.”





What is a Puppy Mill?

“A dog breeding operation in which the health of the dogs is disregarded in order to maintain a low overhead and maximize profits.”

Avenson v. Zegart, 577 F. Supp. 958, 960 (United States District Court, D. Minnesota, Sixth Division January 17, 1984)

The Problem With Mill Bred Puppies, Kittens & Rabbits

- Breeding methods are inherently cruel.
- Inbreeding frequently results in costly future medical expenses.
- Pet stores may use predatory lending schemes to finance animals.
- Public health issues - zoonotic diseases (from animals to humans).

Pet Stores Say They Source Only From USDA Licensed Facilities, but...



- 45% of the USDA licensed dog dealers during 2024 never had a USDA compliance inspection.
- One out of every five USDA inspections uncovered failures, often with no corrective action taken.
- 30% of violations are for veterinary issues: sick, injured or even dead animals having never been seen by a veterinarian or given medical care.

LOCAL NEWS

Colorado group rescues more than 150 dogs from alleged puppy mill

by: [Greg Nieto](#)

Posted: Jul 22, 2025 / 10:16 PM MDT

Updated: Jul 23, 2025 / 05:17 AM MDT

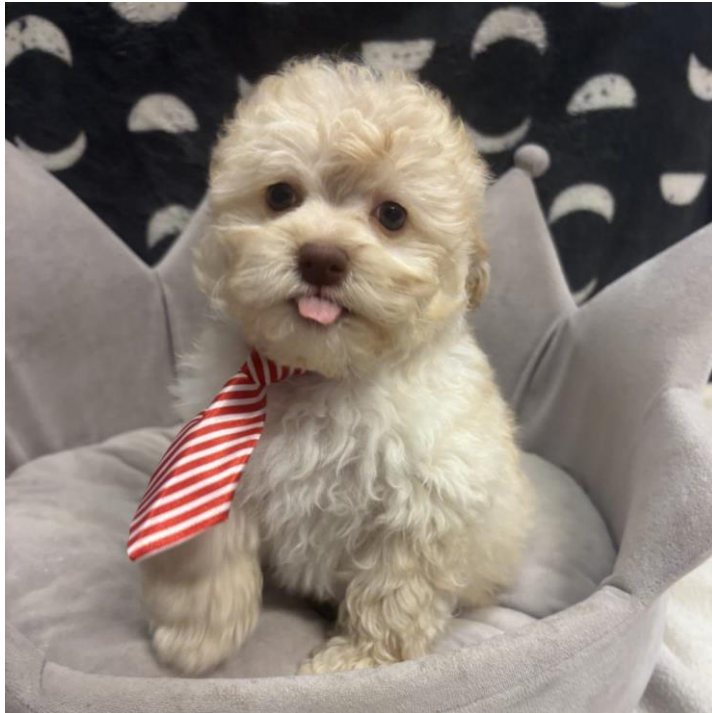


“We saw several dogs with missing limbs, or parts of limbs, likely due to the mat strangling and cutting off circulation and then limbs falling off.”

COLORADO (KDVR) — They’re calling it one of the worst cases they have ever seen: A Colorado puppy mill rescue group recently pulled 165 schnauzers from a property in southwest Colorado.

Puppies Can Be Expensive

Male Havapoo (Havanese x Poodle)
Born: 4/27/25 \$6,199.99 USDA#47-B-0126



Puppies can be a major purchase, often requiring financing through a lender affiliated with the pet shop. In Colorado lenders can charge up to 36%.

A \$6,000 puppy financed for 36 months at 36% would cost the owner \$9,893.62.

Like any finance deal, if you fail to make payments the “property” may be repossessed.

7-29-2025 - Colorado Pet Store

Cute Puppies Can Age Out

Female Havashire (Havanese x Yorkie) Born: 3/27/25 **SALE!**

Originally: \$1899.99 Now: \$1699.99! USDA# 47-B-0126



As puppies get older, they may be less desirable to customers, so pet stores often mark down prices in an effort to move inventory.

Puppies that don't sell may be dumped on shelters or sent to a mill to become breeding stock for even more puppies.

Health & Financial Concerns

- In-breeding of animals often results in health and genetic problems that may not be apparent for months, or even years after the animal is brought home.
- These problems can cost owners hundreds, or even thousands of dollars.
- When owners cannot afford medical care and otherwise “curable” animal may be euthanized, or the animal may be surrendered to a shelter, thus creating an extra burden on shelter resources.

HEALTH

Pet store puppies linked to outbreak of infections in humans, CDC says

By Audrey McNamara

December 18, 2019 / 11:31 AM EST / **CBS News**

Multi-drug-resistant infections reported across 13 U.S. states have been linked to contact with puppies, particularly puppies at pet stores, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said Tuesday. The infections are caused by a bacteria known as *Campylobacter* that can cause diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps.

The CDC said 15 out of 24 people who were interviewed reported having contact with a puppy at a pet store, and 80 percent of those people reported a link to **Petland**, a pet store chain.

Proactive Measure

- ✓ There are currently no pet stores in the City and County of Denver selling puppies and kittens. None of the Denver pet stores checked sell rabbits.
- ✓ Passing an ordinance would not result in lost revenues or jobs, but it would prevent the possibility of a puppy, kitten or bunny mill from marketing in Denver.

Prohibitions Increase as More States and Cities Learn About the Problems Mills Create

- ✓ Eight states* and 500 cities and townships nationwide, including 24 in Colorado, have banned the sale of mill bred dogs and cats in pet stores.

*CA, MD, ME, WA, IL, NY, OR, VT

Ordinances Passed* in 24 Colorado Cities and Townships

- (2025) Windsor, Ridgway, Greeley, Telluride
- (2024) Commerce City, Fort Collins, Littleton,
Bayfield
- (2023) Johnstown, Aurora, Englewood,
Mancos
- (2021) Minturn, Superior, Vail
- (2020) Silverthorne, Alma, Fairplay
- (2019) Eagle, Dillon, Frisco, Breckenridge,
Berthoud
- (2011) Fountain

* As of July 30, 2025. Several other city ordinances are under consideration

However, success also means if pet stores can't sell animals in their current location they look elsewhere. **Denver could be an attractive market.**

Denver places second in new study of dog friendly U.S. cities

by: [Abraham Jewett](#)
Posted: May 13, 2025 / 12:58 PM MDT
Updated: May 13, 2025 / 04:30 PM MDT

SHARE    

DENVER ([KDVR](#)) — A dog-walking study released in May ranked Denver as the second most dog friendly city in the U.S.

The study, conducted by footwear brand Kuru, said Denver earned its high ranking thanks to 96% of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park, 65% of Denverites owning a dog and the city having a "strong safety score."

Petland has already registered the domain [Petlandcolorado.com](https://petlandcolorado.com)

‘I am paying \$7,000 for ashes’: One family’s Petland story



This Ordinance Will Not:

- Prohibit or impact responsible, local breeders who only sell directly to the public so they can screen potential buyers.
- Prevent pet stores from having “adoption” events in coordination with local shelters or rescues.
- Close the Denver market to the majority of pet stores that focus on pet products and services—a \$152 billion dollar industry.”

Denver Animal Shelter

Denver's Open Admission Animal Shelter

- 44% increase in animal intake compared to 2019 pre-pandemic numbers.
- Owner surrendered animals increased by 175% in 2024 compared to 2019.
- Increase continues into first six months of 2025: owner surrendered animals increased by 200% compared to 2019.

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-- Quote from Denver Animal Shelter