

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



Councilman Chris Hinds
Denver City Council – August 4, 2025

What is a Puppy Mill?



Humane World Blog

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



DATE: June 2, 2023 | AUTHOR: Kiny Block

“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)

Example: (Someone adopt him!)

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.”



“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

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.

It's Happening in Colorado:

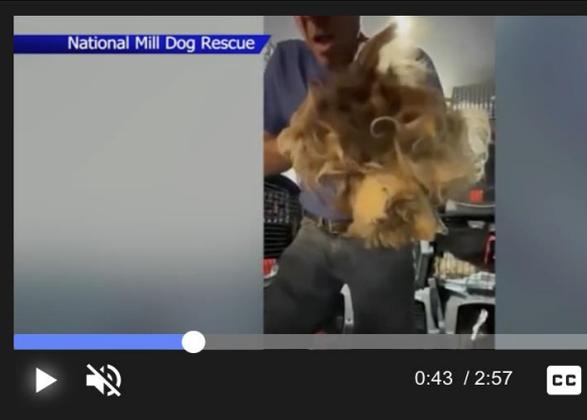
LOCAL NEWS

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.

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.

This is a 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.
- ✓ 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

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.”

Stats on 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