



Advocates for Responsible Pet Ownership
Attn.: Janet Chernin

13 May 2009

Via email: caninecasbah@eastlink.ca

Dear Ms Chernin:

On behalf of Darrell Dexter, Leader of the New Democratic Party, I write to enclose the response of the NDP to the election questionnaire distributed by the Advocates for Responsible Pet Ownership.

I trust that your members will have the opportunity to review these answers in informing their voting intentions in this election. More details on our platform, *Better Deal 2009*, are available on our website at <http://www.ns.ndp.ca/>.

We thank you for the opportunity to outline our positions on these important issues.

Best regards,

Dan O'Connor

Dan O'Connor
Chief of Staff to Darrell Dexter
Leader, Nova Scotia New Democratic Party

Dear Honourable Darrel Dexter,

ARPO – Advocates for Responsible Pet Ownership is an organization that is working towards creating a companion animal friendly Nova Scotia where pet owners and non-pet owners can live together harmoniously. We educate the public about responsible pet ownership and advocate for strengthened anti-cruelty laws. We supply educational materials at pet events on responsible pet ownership. We support the efforts of provincially funded shelters as well as independent rescue organizations.

We respectfully request that you answer the following questions so that ARPO members can make an informed voting decision in the upcoming election.

1. Will your party strengthen the anti-cruelty laws of Nova Scotia by working with the Judicial Department to increase fines and sentences for those persons that are found guilty of animal cruelty and/or neglect?

Yes.

2. Will your party work with the NS SPCA to build legislation that protects the quality of life of all companion animals in Nova Scotia - including those that are used for breeding and livestock purposes?"

The NDP supported the passage of the Animal Protection Act in November, 2008. Once there is sufficient experience with the Act and its regulations it will be possible for stakeholders to determine if further legislation is necessary to adequately protect companion animals.

3. Will your party push to have all municipalities enacting humane animal laws and require that BSL be rescinded in those municipalities that have enacted such legislation? ((breed specific legislation enacts punitive laws based on breed of dog rather than the actions of negligent owner's regardless of breed or mix)

The NDP will work with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities to develop model humane by-laws. The NDP does not support breed-specific legislation.

4. Will your party increase funding to the NS SPCA to facilitate the hiring and training of more cruelty investigators to adequately address the need? (currently other provinces are increasing funding ex. N.B. & Que.)

The NDP has called for adequate funding to address the problem of cruelty to animals. However, Rodney MacDonald's Conservative government has put Nova Scotia in a difficult position. The Conservative government

enjoyed an historic revenue increase of \$1.3 billion over the last three years. However, its 2009 budget is not only the last in Canada to be introduced, but the government also admits that it is already \$260 million in deficit. That MacDonald deficit is there now, no matter who wins the next election.

An NDP government will endeavour to increase funding to the NS SPCA during the term of its mandate, but within the context of balancing the budget.

5. Will your party support a province wide TNR (trap-neuter-release) program for feral cats?

Yes.

Please feel free to elaborate. ARPO looks forward to your response and all responses will be circulated province wide to like minded organizations with a media release.

Sincerely,

Janet Chernin

Director at Large,

ARPO – Advocates for Responsible Pet Ownership

www.arpolistens.ca

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