

MODERN FERRET

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April 30, 2001

City Council Member:

I am writing to ask you to vote in favor of *Intro 627-A: The Ferret Regulation Bill* on May 9, 2001. Enclosed is some information that may help you better understand ferrets and their place as domesticated pets in the homes of citizens throughout the world.

Based on physical evidence, zoologists and zoo-archaeologists — including the Smithsonian Institution, The Museum of Natural History, The USDA, and 155 zoos and zoological organizations — have classified the ferret as a domesticated species. As such, this friendly little animal deserves to be treated the same as other domesticated species, such as the dog and cat. Humane organizations such as the ASPCA, the Humane Society of New York, the HSUS, and others have all concluded that ferrets can live in harmony with humans, and both humans and ferrets benefit from this arrangement. It is a sad commentary on the City of New York that a few people within the Department of Health who are relying on information dating back to the 1930s (during which time public hysteria led to bans on many animals that posed no proven danger to humans) have been able to truncate the rights of citizens to choose to keep a safe domesticated animal as a pet.

One of the concerns raised by the DoH and Mayor Giuliani has to do with rabies. Enclosed you will find information on rabies in ferrets. The fact is that there is not a single case in recorded history of a ferret transmitting rabies to a human. Not a single case. The existence of a USDA-approved (tested effective) rabies vaccine for ferrets, with a 10-year track record, makes it seem that the DoH is chasing ghosts with regard to concerns about rabies in ferrets. In addition, *Intro 627-A* requires all ferrets to receive the approved rabies vaccination.

I have had contact with thousands of ferret owners since I started *Modern Ferret* magazine in 1994. I've received letters from many of the more than 50,000 people who have read my book *The Ferret: An Owner's Guide to a Happy Healthy Pet*. Even people with ferrets who I've met in line at the supermarket have been educated, responsible, and generally affluent. These are people who learn about their pets and take good care of them. New York City is filled with this type of person who wants to be able to legally keep one of the safest domesticated pets available — the ferret.

I urge you to vote in favor of *Intro 627-A* on May 9. There is no rational reason to continue to ban these charming little creatures who already bring joy to the lives of thousands of New York City dwellers. If you have any questions about ferrets, please feel free to contact me on my direct line at 631-467-8810 or by e-mail at mary@modernferret.com.

Sincerely,

Mary R. Shefferman
Editor

Trixie, Balthazar, Cauliflower, Koosh, and Gabrielle
The Ferrets

enclosures