

July 13, 2016

His Worship Denis Coderre, Mayor of Montreal  
Bureau Accès Montréal de Ville-Marie  
Hôtel de ville  
275, rue Notre-Dame Est,  
Montréal, QC, H2Y 1C6

Dear Sir:

As veterinarians and colleagues of Amanda Scholefield who has sent a letter concerning this issue, we the professionals of Timberlea Veterinary Clinic feel that in light of the terrible tragedy that recently befell the Vadnais family, and the resulting media focus on pit bulls, we understand the need for the Mayor's office to take a stand on issues relating to dogs and public safety. However, we are convinced that instituting breed specific legislation, such as a ban on pit bulls, will not have the desired effect of reducing the number of dog bites, and will instead punish thousands of responsible dog owners. Instead we would urge the Mayor's office to focus their efforts on enforcing existing bylaws, and on adopting dangerous dog legislation, whereby the behaviour, and not the physical appearance of the dog dictate the controls placed upon it.

As professionals in a busy veterinary clinic, we interact with multiple put bulls or pit bull type dogs on a daily basis. These dogs are generally sterilized, well socialized and responsibly cared for by their families. Due to the nature of our work, many of the animals brought through our doors are stressed, suffering from injury or illness and are in pain. Despite this, the majority of the pit bull type dogs we treat receive their veterinary care with wagging tails. Our experience shows that the physical appearance of our patients does not determine the level of risk they pose to our staff.

In conclusion, before moving forward with the proposed breed specific legislation, we would invite members of the Mayor's office to meet any of the thousands of well trained, well cared for and well-loved pit bulls living in the greater Montreal area. We would also encourage the Mayor's office to develop effective dangerous dog bylaws in conjunction with veterinary behaviorists, animal welfare groups and other experts in the field. By doing so, no specific breeds would be discriminated against, but individual dogs of any breed showing signs of aggression towards people or other animals would be identified and with that, future bites prevented.

Respectfully yours,

Veterinarians

Animal Health technicians

Front office assistants