

Anja Fuechtbauer

I am opposed to the amendment to ban prong collar use as there is no scientific evidence in existence which supports this ban. Prong collars elicit a strong emotional response due to their looks and design. However, I would like to highlight that these collars have been explicitly designed to evenly distribute pressure around a dogs neck and protect the trachea of a dog. Unlike a normal flat collar or slip lead which exclusively put pressure on a dogs trachea resulting in a dog to choke and wheeze.

I would like to ask the law makers to seriously look at the scientific facts proposed and create laws based on scientific evidence. Professional dog trainers around the world utilise tools such as the prong collar to aid in their training and rehabilitation of dog with behaviour issues. Tools such as a prong collar keep dogs out of shelters and from being euthanised due to behavioural issues.

I propose to introduce training with an approved / accredited professional dog trainer in the use of a prong collar as a requirement to obtain one. Education is key. Not everybody wants to use a prong collar and that is ok but by banning the use you are causing severe limitations on the safe handling as well as rehabilitation of dogs suffering from behaviour problems.

As a side effect of COVID dog ownership has significantly increased. At the same time critical exposure of dogs to the environment has been limited, creating a perfect storm of dogs struggling to deal with the reality of an 'open' post covid world. By banning the prong you rely on happy hour lucky trainers to help the dogs deal. The most highly regarded dog trainers in the world all accept that prong collars can be beneficial in rehabilitating of such dogs.

Often considered a 'power steering' tool for dogs, this tool is only used during training and taken off after the session is finished. There is one (1!) photo on the internet of a dog who has suffered from sever necrosis caused by animal neglect where they left the prong collar on a dog for weeks. The skin reacted to the metal. You can find the exact same necrosis cases caused by flat collars and harnesses. This one picture is not scientific evidence to ban a tool.

From personal experience, I can say that the prong collar helped us with our dogs frustration reactivity. This is very common with dogs who see other dogs and are used to play with them and are held back by the leash. The frustration manifests itself in barking and lunging at the leash. Over time it can develop into aggression if not addressed.

My partner and I are both academics (PhD and Masters degree) and are committed to our dog. After months of trying the 'positive only' agenda which gets pushed so successfully by marketing savvy trainers, we had to admit that no fancy sausage or other treat could ever compete with 'playing with other dogs' on our dogs reinforcer hierarchy. Other dogs were on the top. And despite several training sessions per month with several trainers and many mornings working with a friend and their dog as partners, we finally met a trainer who introduced us to the prong collar.

Instead of doing 180 degree turn arounds when we saw a dog on the other side of the street, we could pass them safely. We didn't have to be anxious about our dog losing her nerve. We could reinforce a boundary fairly and the most health conscious way possible. In short - it finally opened up our world again. Of course we didn't just slap on a prong and off we went. We had a trainer show us how, read books and educated ourselves in learning theory and operant conditioning. If even monks (recommend to look up the Monks of New Skete) who train and raise German shepherds use prong collars, then they can't be so bad. We also worked heavily on impulse control, making positive reinforcement stronger and other things. Using a prong collar is ONE tool in our toolbox. Not the

only tool. And it should never be.

I hope you will take above submission into consideration. I hope you will see past the people screaming the loudest because they don't like the look of the tool even though they never ever even touched on or tried on. They are blunt. They do not pierce the skin (I recommend looking up videos from Leerburg and Tom Davis who have great examples with prongs on balloons).

Tasmania did great following a science based approach when it came to Covid. I hope you can do the same when it comes to dogs.

Not anybody needs or wants to use a prong. And that's perfectly fine. But please ensure education and training and the tool stay available for those who need it.

Thank you for your consideration.