

# Animal Wellness Groups Call on CDC to Pause Dog Importation Policy as Airlines No Longer Transport U.S. Dogs Home

*Rules are a 'de facto' ban, cruelly dividing humans from their beloved pets when American pet owners wish to travel home, animal wellness groups say*

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*Dr. Thomas Pool, senior veterinarian at the Center for a Humane Economy*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Animal wellness groups say new dog importation rules by [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) are unjustified and cruel, as eight airlines have responded with confusion, [by disallowing Americans overseas](#) with dogs to book flights home along with their pets in the cabin or cargo hold, from more than 100 countries the agency deems high risk for canine rabies.

The rule is now affecting U.S. citizens and residents, tourists, and even military families who travel with dogs, along with global rescue organizations that import dogs into the United States for adoption as they are now stuck without recourse as airlines drop dogs from flights. Airlines explain CDC's requirements are simply confusing and not possible to follow.

Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy are calling on the agency to immediately pause implementation as planned for Aug. 1.

“CDC has no justification for charging ahead with such an irresponsible policy that is already hurting dogs with their families abroad,” said Dr. Thomas Pool (MPH, DVM), senior veterinarian at the Center for a Humane Economy, who explains that dog importation rules are based thinly on just four cases of canine rabies from dogs flown into the United States over a period of six years. During that time, an estimated 6-to-7 million other dogs were imported successfully.

“I spent 43 years in regulatory veterinary medicine at federal and state levels, dealing with rabies that entire time, and these new CDC regulations have nothing to do with preventing rabies in the United States,” Pool added. “I firmly believe the CDC's import rules are unjustified, unscientific,

expensive, and unforgivably cruel.”

Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy offered this statement:

“We are seeing on the ground that CDC rules are a de facto ban on dog travel, which is leaving many Americans with an impossible choice to stay out of country or return home without their dog. This is simply unacceptable, especially when there is zero justification to cause this kind of stress.”

CDC Shows Arbitrary Decision-Making as it Relaxes Some Rules, But Not Others

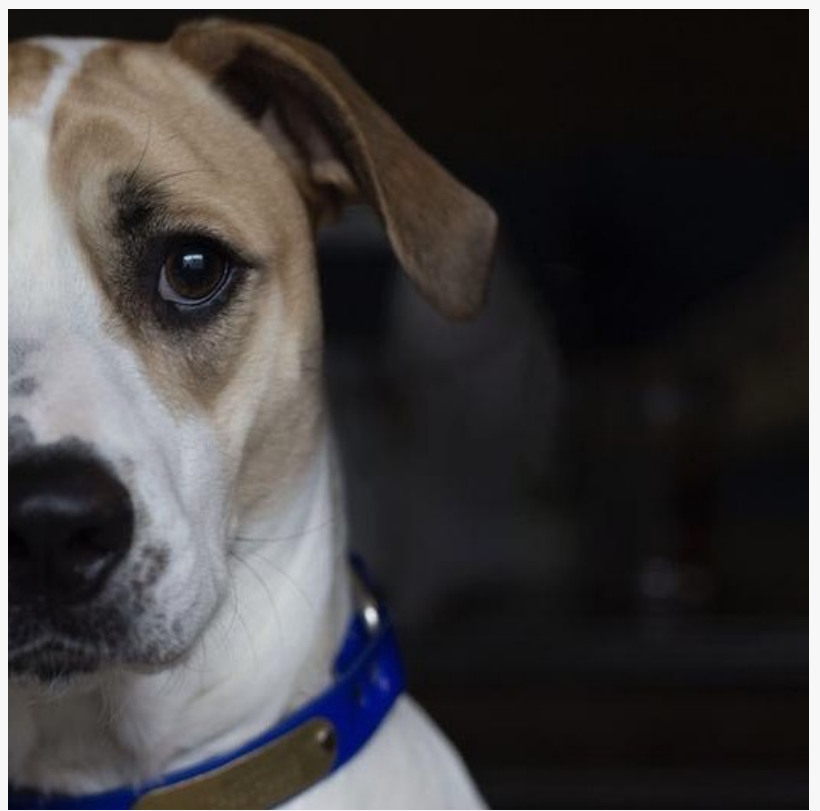
On Monday, CDC eased some of its new set of policies for dog importation, after public outcry and demands from members of Congress. U.S. representatives wrote appeals, adding their voices to 14 U.S. senators who wrote a strongly-worded letter to CDC Director Mandy Cohen, calling the dog import policy “flawed” with “detrimental consequences” especially for those among 400,000 people who cross the U.S.-Canadian border every day.

Cohen responded by dropping the mandated rabies vaccination and reduced the paperwork requirements to permit less complicated border crossings with countries deemed no or low risk for canine rabies.

But mass confusion of the new rules remains, along with an unnecessarily restrictive policy that is causing airlines to announce flight suspensions for dogs, making it impossible for American dogs overseas to fly home.

In recent days, eight airlines have announced that passengers flying into the United States can no longer book their dogs to travel with them. Airlines Lufthansa and Swiss Air are among them and have both posted this statement on their websites:

“Due to new restrictions imposed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the entry regulations for dogs into the USA are changing. As of August 1, 2024, new bookings for dogs into the USA are no longer possible until further notice.”



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[Finnair](#), based in Helsinki, Finland, is more explicit and is telling customers that one of the reasons why the airline cannot offer passengers' dogs safe passage to the U.S. is due to a new air waybill requirement:

"... Currently, the US customs authorities are unable to confirm whether they will be able to handle the air waybills as required by the new regulations. Also, travel-related systems do not allow us to attach the document to a passenger booking and process it, which is why it is currently not possible for us to meet the CDC requirements."

The airlines continued: "If health regulations are not followed, you as a customer may face challenges in the U.S. entry process; for example, the dog may be denied entry into the country and returned to the country of origin. Unfortunately, we cannot confirm new bookings for dogs traveling to the USA, either in the cabin or in the hold, until further notice."

Impact on Animal Welfare Charities is Disastrous

CDC rules have already shuttered work by many organizations that rescue dogs internationally, importing them into the United States for adoption.

Anna Umansky, co-founder of Sochi Dogs, says the CDC import rules have disabled the charity from its humanitarian and animal welfare work in war-torn Ukraine.

"As a nonprofit rescue we were prepared to do whatever it took to comply with the new CDC rules, but they are so stringent that not only did the temporary rules make it too costly to fly dogs, now the airlines are banning dogs on flights to the U.S. because the CDC rules are too difficult for them to comply with," said Umansky.

## ABOUT

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) whose mission is to help animals by promoting laws and regulations at federal, state and local levels that forbid cruelty to all animals. The group also works to enforce existing anti-cruelty and wildlife protection laws. Animal Wellness Action believes helping animals helps us all. X: @AWAction\_News

The Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help animals by helping forge a more humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both. The Center believes helping animals helps us all. X: @TheHumaneCenter

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