



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD
Office of the First Selectman

February 21, 2007

Senator Mary Ann Handley, Co-Chair
Representative Peggy Sayers, Co-Chair
Representative Elizabeth B. Ritter, Vice Chair
Senator Gayle S. Slossberg, Vice Chair
Senator Andrew W. Roraback, Ranking Member
Representative Mary Ann Carson, Ranking Member
Other distinguished Members of the Public Health Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Subject: Proposed Bills #5745 and #6701 Concerning Lyme Disease

The Ridgefield Board of Selectmen, at their February 7, 2007 meeting, voted to unanimously support Bill #5747 and Bill #6701 presently in legislation. Ridgefield has noted the rising incidence of Lyme disease in our town with great concern. Ridgefield ranked #2 for Lyme disease case numbers in 2002, the last year laboratory surveillance was required, with 95 cases that met CDC criteria. Actual reported cases approached 500 cases. Equally disturbing was the fact that our neighboring city, Danbury, where residents enjoy many outdoor activities, was #1 in the state with 104 cases. Fairfield County continues to top the list of counties with reported Lyme disease cases.

Ridgefield responded to this serious medical situation by establishing a town Lyme Disease Task Force responsible for prevention, education and remediation measures. We believe the state's inability to accurately count Lyme Disease case numbers greatly hampers our ability to evaluate the effectiveness of this effort. Lyme disease is an illness that shows no sign of diminishing without serious, active statewide measures. At present, it appears we stand alone in implementing a targeted volunteer program to support our local health department.

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Ridgefield has identified that it faces a serious medical threat to its citizens in tick-borne diseases. Tick infection rates for Ridgefield have reached the 30% level. Our Department of Health recognizes that it presently does not have the manpower, materials or funding to address this issue. We ask that the Connecticut Department of Health be held accountable for the lack of attention this health crisis is receiving. The 34% statewide increase in cases recorded in 2005 is unacceptable. The fact that Connecticut consistently ranks #1 in Lyme disease cases nationwide is a disturbing honor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rudy Marconi", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rudy Marconi
First Selectman