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Environment Committee
300 Capitol Avenue
Room 3200 LOB
Hartford, CT 06106

Testimony for Public Hearing
Monday Feb. 9, 2009

Re: AN ACT PRESERVING CERTAIN HORSE TRAILS HB 5108

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

My name is Alesia DiFederico, I am here today on behalf of Southbury Horse & Livestock Association. We would like to offer our **SUPPORT for Bill 5108, the preservation of certain horse trails.**

In these modern times people are less familiar with horses. Many people assume that horse trail riding is novelty or small user group here in CT. The northeast is home to nearly one million equines and the largest user group in general is trail riders.

Connecticut has the highest horse density in the northeast, nine horses per square mile. The competition for land is fierce, agricultural pursuits are squeezed out by development everyday. Trails historically ridden and created by horseback riders are disappearing at an alarming rate. Bill 5108 will be a valuable resource and protection of a time honored tradition. Please support Bill 5108 so trail riders will have a place to ride in CT.

I would also like to offer our **SUPPORT for HB5807 AN ACT CONCERNING ABANDONED ANIMALS.** Pets left behind by displaced families must be acknowledged. Please support Bill 5807 to save these pets from starvation and exposure when they too are evicted from their homes.

Last but certainly not least I would like to urge you all to **OPPOSE Raised Bill 784 AN ACT CONCERNING ROAMING LIVESTOCK AND PUBLIC SAFETY.** This bill would allow our **UNTRAINED** Animal Control Officers a free hand in the capture and care of large animals as if they were the same as a cat or dog.

A Twelve hundred pound horse is NOT a cat or dog. Our ACO's are not mandated to receive ANY training in the handling of any animals let alone a large livestock animal. Can you imagine a horse confined inside a chain link dog kennel?

Most towns do not have the facilities or experience to handle the custody and care of large livestock creating a potentially fatal situation for both the animal and the officers involved. Please **OPPOSE Bill 784 as it is currently written.**

Sincerely,

Alesia DiFederico
Secretary Southbury Horse & Livestock Association