



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Testimony Regarding, Senate Bill No. 784, *An Act Concerning Roaming Livestock and Public Safety*,  
Before the Environment Committee, February 9th, 2009

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, members of the Environment Committee, my name is F. Philip Prelli. Thank you for the opportunity to be before you today to testify. This bill is an initiative of the Department and we urge your support. The version before you is the house bill that died on the Senate calendar last year.

Public Act 00-92 repealed antiquated provisions relating to the impoundment of livestock. Portions of these provisions dated back as far as 1949. Due to these changes, there is currently no legal authority for animal control officers to handle such situations *even when there is a clear threat to public safety*.

The bill enables any animal control officer to impound livestock roaming on public property **if posing a threat to public safety or whose presence on property other than the property of its owner or keeper creates a threat to public safety or threat to other animals or property**. The bill establishes a notification process either to the owner or keeper of the offending animal or newspaper notification if the owner is unknown. It also establishes a process to issue fines for repeat offenders and enables municipal animal control officers to sell or mercifully destroy unclaimed livestock after seven days.

The following are a few historic examples of public safety threats due to roaming livestock that the Department of Agriculture has knowledge of:

- In early 2008, a collision took place in the town of Bethany. The driver and the horse were both killed.
- Complaints received from Amtrak Police regarding cattle that are frequently getting loose and wandering onto the trains tracks causing an extremely unsafe condition should a train hit one. Owner has been made aware of the problem, but has not fixed the fences.
- Cattle frequently getting loose and wandering onto Interstate 84 causing an extremely dangerous situation for people either trying to avoid the cattle or should there be a car or truck vs. cow collision.
- Some stallions and bulls can be quite aggressive towards people and could be a danger to the public if allowed to roam at large.
- Any of the larger livestock (goats, sheep, cows, horses etc) and ratite species may cause motor vehicle accidents if wandering on the public roads and highways. These accidents may be caused by motor vehicle operators striking these animals or by swerving to avoid them.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal.

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