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RE:
SUPPORT HB5108
OPPOSE SB 784
SUPPORT HB5807

Members of the Environment Committee:

Feb 9, 2009

The Connecticut Horse Council would like to offer **support for HB5108** An Act Preserving Certain Horse Trails.

This legislation would provide important protection to trails that have known equestrian use. Horses were among the first modes of transportation, and were used to found this country. They were used to pull stages, carry people and packs, and became so valuable to a person that horse theft was named as a serious crime.

Today, trails which typically would see equestrian use, have frequently been designated off limits due to new user groups taking over trail management. This bill would help stem the tide of trails being closed to horses. To clarify: the bill does not make these horse trails exclusively, but rather it protects equestrian use as part of the heritage of uses on the trail.

Additionally, Connecticut Horse Council would like to strongly **OPPOSE SB 784** An Act Concerning Roaming Livestock and Public Safety. SB 784 could potentially put Animal Control Officers at risk, by asking them to capture and handle large animals. Currently, no training is provided to ACOs, so most of them have no experience in this regard. Furthermore, most towns do not have proper facilities to house livestock, and it is unreasonable to believe that they could safely maintain the animals in question.

Finally, Connecticut Horse Council would like to **SUPPORT HB5807** An Act Concerning Abandoned Animals. Animals being left behind by families who are evicted is a growing and difficult problem. Horse Council recognizes that this should be addressed, and we feel this bill is an important step.

We appreciate the Committee's consideration of these very important issues.

Thank you,
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