



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Testimony Regarding, *Senate Bill 994, An Act Concerning Leghold Traps*, Before the Environment Committee, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, members of the Environment Committee, my name is F. Philip Prelli, Commissioner of Agriculture. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **opposition** to the above referenced bill.

The Department has concerns regarding the language of this bill. The title of the bill is misleading. Lines 30 through 41 expand the limitations on the types of traps that can be used to capture wildlife and also disallow the killing of any trapped animal. The bill includes "body-crushing traps", including, but not limited to conibear-style traps". Conibear traps are an effective way to trap beaver and eliminate flooding problems. Although the proponents of the bill will argue that "suitcase-type" beaver traps (a form of live trap) are effective, one still has to relocate the animal to another area. These traps are very dangerous to the person setting the trap as well and are up to 10 times the cost of a conibear trap. Suitcase type traps for beaver are large and spring loaded under heavy spring pressure which can snap back and injure the person setting the trap.

Connecticut farm crops are often the target of nuisance wildlife such as raccoon. Raccoons can wreak extensive damage on the popular sweet corn crop or beaver dam flooded fields can ruin farm crops such as field or sweet corn or any other crop planted in fields abutting waterways or wetlands. What is a farmer to do when night after night, marauding raccoons trash his crop? Relocate? Trap and exterminate is the most effective method. Raccoons soon acclimate to noise making devices and other scare methods and ignore them. Coyotes will kill a sheep breeder's lamb crop and attack a calving cow that is down. The Department of Agriculture assesses and reimburses livestock owners for confirmed coyote damage. Leg hold traps are the only effective way to trap coyote. Trapping and relocation is not good policy as animals relocated generally do not stay "relocated" and may become a nuisance to someone else, thereby not solving the problem, just moving it elsewhere. Also, species that are particular nuisances to farmers such as raccoon, beaver, coyote are abundant and cause a myriad of public health and safety problems throughout our populated state such as rabies transmission, tick borne disease and motor vehicle accidents. That is why the state has hunting seasons. The bill would not allow a farmer to trap and kill a beaver colony that continually floods his field and kills crops or a coyote that ravages his lamb crop.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.