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Testimony Before the Joint Committee on the Environment  
Connecticut General Assembly, February 9, 2009

Good morning, Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and members of the Joint Committee on the Environment. My name is Marcia Goodman. I am a resident of Cromwell, CT, and I volunteer with several non-profit organizations that serve the welfare of animals.

I particularly want to address four bills that are set down for hearing this morning. The first two would protect the public from unknowingly acquiring sick or unsocialized animals from pet stores:

**Proposed Bill 499, An Act Concerning a Pet Lemon Law**  
**Proposed Bill 5493, An Act Establishing a Dog and Cat Lemon Law**

The most important provision of these bills would require pet stores to acquire their pets from licensed facilities. This requirement, by itself, would do wonders to minimize the number of sick and unsocialized pets that are bred in puppy mills and other unscrupulous facilities and sold to pet stores, usually through brokers.

As a volunteer with a national nonprofit program called Emergency Animal Rescue Service (EARS), I was deployed to a temporary emergency dog shelter in Maine which housed 60% of the 240 dogs that had been seized by the State of Maine from a puppy mill. Our deployment occurred after these dogs had been treated by veterinarians for contagious illnesses and diseases, including mange, so I didn't see the worst of it – one of the veterinarians told me it had sickened her to see the condition of these dogs – but what I saw was difficult enough. These dogs were very skinny – you could see the ribs on most of them – and unsocialized, and so afraid of people that whenever a person walked past the cages, the dogs would spin (run around in circles), or cower in the corner, or whimper, or growl, or some combination.

Except for newborn puppies, none of these dogs reacted to people as healthy dogs would. They refused to walk on leashes. They didn't know how to exercise or play. Most of them wouldn't even leave their cages. They were afraid of everything. Part of our work was socialization. Each day, for part of the day, we'd just sit in their cages, at first on the opposite side of the cage from the dog, to give them a chance to be with human beings in a calming, positive way. The saddest cases were the breeding dogs, both male and female. They were older and the chance that socialization would have any positive effect was minimal. The 140 dogs in that emergency shelter were about 60% of the total number of dogs seized from this puppy mill by the State of Maine. The other 40% were not in as good condition, and, because of liability concerns, were kept in another location at which volunteers were not permitted.

To see what a puppy mill is really like, here is a link to the website of an undercover video of the daily life in a puppy mill: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UW4cp0AvC4w>.

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I urge the Committee to favorably report out a bill that would include the provisions of Proposed Bills 499 and 5493. As mentioned above, a primary need is to require that pet stores acquire animals only from licensed facilities. Another important requirement is disclosure to the consumer about the source and condition of the animal being purchased.

**Proposed Bill No 5798, An Act Prohibiting The Unreasonable Confinement And Tethering Of Dogs:**

Some people tether their dogs for extended periods of time, often without access to shelter and sometimes without access to water. Dogs that are kept in this type of isolation for extended periods of time can become unsocialized, and they can also become frightening to a neighborhood. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, reviewing data from 1995-1996, 22% of all fatal dog bites were from restrained animals on the owner's property. I expect you will be hearing this morning from animal control officers who have found that existing laws are not clear enough to enable them to terminate this type of cruelty and potentially dangerous situation.

**Proposed Bill 5811, An Act Concerning Battery Cages and Egg Laying Hens:**

Proposed Bill 5811 An Act Concerning Battery Cages and Egg Laying Hens, would require a sufficient amount of space for hens at least to spread their wings. Factory farms now often place hens, and in fact all chickens, in such small cages that this minimal amount of movement is not possible. Chickens are among the most cruelly treated animals in this country because of huge factory farms that disregard the fact that chickens are living, feeling beings. I urge the Committee to favorably report this bill out.

Finally, I urge the committee to favorably report out the following bills. I am not offering testimony on them because other individuals here today will be doing that:

- 4. Proposed Bill 743: An Act Concerning The Liability For Damage Caused By A Dog.**
- 12. Proposed Bill 5807: An Act Concerning Abandoned Animals.**
- 13. Proposed Bill 5808: An Act Concerning Animal Control Officers And The Release Of Rabies Vaccination Records.**

Thank you for your consideration.