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Transportation Committee  
300 Capitol Ave Room 2300 LOB  
Hartford, CT 06106

March 10, 2010

**RE: HB 5457 AN ACT ENHANCING PENALTIES FOR HARM TO VULNERABLE USERS OF A PUBLIC WAY—Support**

Chairman Guerrara, Chairman Defronzo and members of the committee;

My name is Amy Stegall and I am President of the Connecticut Horse Council. I would urge this committee to strongly support HB 5457 An Act Enhancing Penalties for Harm to Vulnerable Users of a Public Way.

In today's hectic world, road rage and reckless driving are a common occurrence. Unfortunately, motorists are sharing the road with pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians, and when you have a collision, the car "always" wins.

On occasion, our members ride on the shoulders of roads in order to access one trail from another. Or, they are riding on rural roads with lighter traffic. This bill also provides coverage for multiuse trails, which is where our members usually ride.

Horse Council frequently receives reports from our members of near accidents caused by motorists who either are ignorant of the laws, or more often, simply choose to be aggressive and reckless. I am dreading the day when I receive a call informing me that one of our members has been killed or sustained terrible injuries due to a collision with a vehicle. Despite riders being cautious and following rules of the road, it's a losing proposition when a motorist is acting dangerously.

I have a friend who lives in Andover. Her son was nearly killed when riding his bicycle and a driver not paying attention ran him over from behind. When I was living in another state, a neighbor up the road was severely injured while riding his horse on a wide shoulder--the driver was speeding and not paying attention. And sadly, in my town just two days ago, a pedestrian was struck and killed by a car while he was walking along a secondary road not far from my home.

This bill is a good start, and I would like to offer thanks to those who worked to bring it forward. I would however, like to offer a small suggestion. The bill specifies penalties after a "collision" has occurred. I would ask that if possible, the committee expands this to include any injury or death which occurs due to the reckless **actions** of the motorist. Injuries can occur when motorists intentionally crowd horses or bicyclists, or blare horns while speeding by. Sadly, I have seen cases where riders have been injured due to reckless actions and not direct collisions.

This bill will go far in helping to protect the public, and I would again ask that you vote in favor. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Amy Stegall  
President, Connecticut Horse Council