



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Public Hearing – March 1, 2010
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Amey W. Marrella
Department of Environment Protection

Raised Senate Bill No. 125 - AN ACT CONCERNING DOGS AT STATE CAMPGROUNDS

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised Senate Bill No. 125, AN ACT CONCERNING DOGS AT STATE CAMPGROUNDS. The Department of Environmental Protection (Department) offers the following testimony.

We certainly understand and appreciate that there are many campers who prefer to go camping with their family pet. Currently, dogs and other pets are allowed at 4 of the 14 state park and forest campgrounds (a total of over 140 campsites). In addition, dogs and other pets are permitted at the two state forest horse camping areas, and over 70 privately run campgrounds throughout the state allow dogs and pets to join their owners when they camp.

The Department is concerned that a legislative mandate to allow dogs at each and every state campground would have significant negative consequences for campers at those facilities. Among the concerns include: pet waste in the campground; negative impacts to wildlife; barking late at night; and potential aggressive behavior towards campers and other dogs.

As one example of these concerns, consider if just 10% of the campers at Hammonasset Beach State Park were to have a dog with their group, there would be between 50 and 60 dogs on any summer night at the campground in a very confined area. If one of those dogs were to begin to bark at 3 a.m. in the campground, other dogs would likely follow, and there would quickly become a situation that would be a significant disruption for the over 1000 campers that are sleeping in the park on any given night.

The Department is committed to continuing to analyze state park campgrounds for possible expansion of the number of areas where pets are permitted and would welcome the opportunity to work with the proponents of the bill to discuss this further.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact the Department's legislative liaison, Robert LaFrance, at (860) 424-3401 or Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov.