



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



**Testimony presented to the
Environment Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly
By the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture
Steven K. Reviczky
Friday March 2, 2012**

H.B. 5119 - An Act Concerning Certain Conditions of Denial for the Issuance of a License or Permit by the Commissioner of Agriculture

H.B. 5123 – An Act Concerning the Placement of Animals Seized in Animal Cruelty Cases

H.B. 5124 – An Act Concerning the Appeal of Certain Animal Restraint Orders

Good morning Chairman Meyer, Chairman Roy, Vice Chairs Senator Maynard and Representative Miller and Ranking Members Senator Roraback and Representative Chapin. I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify today. The Department has three bills this session that we believe merit your support.

The first one, **H.B. 5119 An Act Concerning Certain Conditions of Denial for the Issuance of a License or Permit by the Commissioner of Agriculture**, will allow a degree of flexibility that the agency presently does not have. The Office of the Attorney General has recommended establishment, in statute, general conditions under which the Commissioner may refuse issuance of a license or permit. Currently, many of our statutes do not have, or have only vague language regarding the conditions under which a license or permit application may be refused. A recent incident brought to light a defect in many of our statutes that prevents the Commissioner from denying a license application based on the applicant's past history. Due process, under the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act, for refused, suspended or revoked licenses is preserved.

The second bill that we ask the Committee support is, **H.B. 5123, An Act Concerning the Placement of Animals Seized in Animal Cruelty Cases**. As I am sure the Committee is aware, the Department operates the Second Chance Large Animal Rescue Facility in conjunction with the Department of Correction. We run an excellent program that is beneficial on many levels for the animals we rescue and the inmates that help care for them. Unfortunately, many owners of large animals, particularly horses, are facing tough times. Our first choice is to work with these owners to get the animals' nourishment and veterinary care. Sometimes we need to act more forcefully and seize the animals and we then must care for them. It is a costly proposition. This proposal would allow the Department of Agriculture the flexibility to place animals obtained through animal cruelty investigations in a safe environment as soon as the animal is rehabilitated and healthy. This will lessen the cost outlays for food and medical care that the Department is



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responsible for, prior to the transfer of the animal through a public sale or auction, thereby enabling us to stretch our limited resources and rescue more animals in need.

The third agency bill that we request the Committee's support for is, **H.B. 5124 An Act Concerning the Appeal of Certain Animal Restraint Orders**. Unfortunately, from time to time, in response to an attack or bite, Animal Control Officers find it necessary to place a restraining order to prevent an animal from having an opportunity to injure someone else. This bill is a technical change to C.G.S. § 22-358 to clearly state that during the appeal of a restraint order placed on a biting animal, the order must be complied with. Currently when an appeal is made the restraint order is "stayed" during the appeal. This provides an opportunity for dangerous dogs and other animals to bite and cause injury during the appeal process.

Thank you for your attention to these important bills.