

Testimony presented to the Planning and Development Committee of
the Connecticut General Assembly

By the Connecticut Department of Agriculture

2/22/12

H.B. 5157 An Act Concerning the Quarantine of Biting Dogs in Public Pounds

Good morning Chairman Cassano and Chairman Gentile, Vice Chairs Senator Coleman and Representative Grogins and Ranking Members Senator Fasano and Representative Aman. I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify here today.

The current language of CGS Section 22-358 states that the Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer, any municipal animal control officer or regional animal control officer shall quarantine the animal in a public pound OR order the owner or keeper to quarantine it in a veterinary hospital, kennel or other building or enclosure approved by the Commissioner for such purpose. It is the option of the Officer as to where the animal shall be quarantined. By changing "shall" to "may" it opens a loop hole in the statute that would allow the Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer, any municipal animal control officer or regional animal control officer to not quarantine a biting animal as they (ACO) may have an option to quarantine such animal. This would present a health risk for the victim from potential exposure to rabies.

With that in mind, from line 10 thru 15 of HB5157 the language should be changed to read:

When any dog, cat or other animal has bitten a person on the premises of the owner or

keeper of such dog, cat or other animal, the Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer, any municipal animal control officer or regional animal control officer [may] shall quarantine such dog, cat or other animal on the premises of the owner or keeper of such dog, cat or other animal unless such dog, cat or other animal is not currently vaccinated against rabies or if in the opinion of the Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer, any municipal animal control officer or regional animal control officer that such dog cat or other animal will not be quarantined in a manner approved by the Commissioner or that such dog cat or other animal is a danger to people or other animals then the Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer, any municipal animal control officer or regional animal control officer shall order such dog cat or other animal quarantined in a public pound, veterinary hospital, kennel or other building or enclosure approved by the Commissioner.

The purpose of this law is to protect victims by observing the animal for symptoms of rabies. Though the risk is low, a vaccinated animal can develop rabies as no vaccine can offer a 100% immunization guarantee. By making these recommended changes to the Bill it would help strengthen the law and not weaken it.