

March 14, 2013

Environment Committee  
Connecticut State Legislature

Re: My Support of HB 5836

Dear Committee Members, Other State Legislators and Concerned Connecticut Residents:

I have been doing animal rescue in Connecticut for approximately 25 years. My volunteer efforts have mostly been geared towards trapping feral cats in Bridgeport and getting them spayed/neutered in order to address the overpopulation of unwanted and/or feral cats and kittens. The unwanted cats are a severe burden to the animal control departments. Some cities will not deal with feral cats at all, even if the cat is stuck somewhere injured.

In the last two years, we have set humane cat traps in locations within Bridgeport where they are many feral cats, BUT it is friendly cats going into our traps.. Never have I seen so many nice cats so thin and hungry cats roaming the city. These are nice: they were once pets. People are throwing their cats outside, and I truly believe that it is because they cannot afford to get their cats, and dogs, fixed. Pet care is just not a priority in today's economically rough times. When not fixed, the male cat will start to spray around the home; the female cat, and dogs, go into heat. The funding to curb the overpopulation issue is in the passing of HB 5836. Years ago the City of Bridgeport actually gave funds to a cat rescue group, helping to cover the costs of fixing feral cats. Now it cannot afford to help.

Two years ago, or maybe more, we started a major trapping project at Marina Village Housing Project. Some many cats living outside there. This year I have started trapping cats in PT Barnum Housing Project. The pregnant cats are all over the place. I saw 2 cats trapped in a sewer drain in PT Barnum. I saw a resident letting his dog run free to chase after the stray cats, with the teenagers outside yelling that the dog will make a good fighter. With more funding, the cats owned by lower income residents can be fixed. When the cats and dogs are let outside to fend for themselves, the cats and dogs get pregnant, the dogs can become aggressive; the cats become feral, and the city cannot spend time, rightfully, so to retrain and help an aggressive dog or a cat that has become feral when thrown outside by uncaring owners.

Please pass HB 5836. Families don't have the money to feed their children, let alone fix their pet. There are pet food banks that can help keep the pet in the home, allowing that pet to offer love and companionship to its owners. This bill needs to be passed. Its passing will result in funding saved by shelters from lowering its need to euthanize unwanted and/or unadoptable cats and dogs. Passing this bill allows low income folks to

keep their pets. And in turn, that eases the burden of the animal control departments and the rescue groups, like mine, who can turn back to helping the trap truly feral cats, not abandoned, cats.

Thank you.

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