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March 15, 2013

Environment Committee
Room 3200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: (860) 240-0440

Re: SUPPORT of SB 1020, AAC The Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact

Dear Co-Chair Meyer, Co-Chair Gentile, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of The Humane Society of the United States, the nation's largest animal protection organization, and our members in Connecticut, I respectfully urge your support of SB 1020, which would allow our state to become a member of the national law enforcement network known as the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact. We at The HSUS support and encourage swift passage of SB 1020.

Wildlife officials estimate that nationally tens of millions of animals are poached each year. Poaching is an enormous problem and far more often than not, poaching activity remains undetected and poachers go unpunished for their crimes. In fact, it is estimated that despite the tireless efforts of game wardens, a mere one to five percent of poachers are ever apprehended by law enforcement.

Poachers exploit wildlife and callously disregard the laws that protect it. They steal from legitimate sportsmen and wildlife watchers. Adequate penalties are imperative for deterring illegal hunting activity. An important component of any law enforcement effort, including one that protects wildlife, is enforcement reciprocity with other states. This truth has already been realized by the forty-one that are members of the compact.

Modeled after the equally successful Driver's License Compact, the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact was first developed back in the early 1990s. If enacted in Connecticut, it would prevent wildlife violators who have lost their hunting, trapping, or fishing privileges in member states from coming here to circumvent those license revocations. Additionally, enacting the compact would ensure that those who have been punished with license revocations for illegal hunting, fishing, or trapping in Connecticut can't avoid their punishment by engaging in those activities in another member state.

Celebrating Animals | Confronting Cruelty

Over the past two decades, states across the country have become members of the compact, and today only seven states have failed to pass the legislation required to join. These seven states, including Connecticut, are unable to reap the benefits of a commonsense and successful law enforcement tool enjoyed by other member states. In addition to Connecticut SB 1020, legislation is currently pending in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire that would allow these states to join the compact as well.

No state deserves to be a safe haven for lawbreakers and joining the compact would end Connecticut's status as a hunting destination for out-of-state criminals. Connecticut should be leading, not lagging, in law enforcement resources. The Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact is an incredibly valuable resource and Connecticut's membership is long overdue.

On behalf of The Humane Society of the United States and our supporters in Connecticut, I strongly urge your support of SB 1020.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,



Annie Hornish
Connecticut State Director
The Humane Society of the United States
Cell: (860) 966-5201
Email: ahornish@humanesociety.org