



Connecticut Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators Association, Inc.

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"A non-profit organization to promote general standards and ethics within the nuisance wildlife control operators industry."

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, Ranking members and members of the Select Committee on Children, the Connecticut Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators Association appreciates the opportunity to comment on HB 5566 An Act Concerning Child Safety by Restricting the Placement of Leghold Traps. We respectfully oppose this legislation that is before you today as it will significantly hinder the state's ability to manage wildlife in a sustainable fashion. As our state continues to become more and more urbanized with sprawl and the development of once sustainable habitat, wildlife becomes more and more comfortable with human interaction.

While these traps and other lawful wildlife management tools are often criticized, they are an important and necessary tool to support a science based approach to management of wildlife in our state. Connecticut currently has some of the most restrictive laws on the books for both Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators(NWCO) and recreational trappers and with that; we have not had any major problems. Further, as an organization, we are not aware of a foothold trap that was used in Connecticut that has injured a person (child or adult) because of where it was placed.

We feel that the proposed legislation would have an impact on the use of these types of traps across the state based on the way the language is written. Hunting, Fishing and trapping have long been recognized as necessary methods for wildlife management in our country. They are also part of a storied tradition and culture for many residents of Connecticut and this country. With continued population growth, wildlife and human conflicts continue to be a concern. Without the use of these types of traps a number of species will likely go unmanaged which will ultimately have a negative impact on the ecosystem.

Additionally the required reporting of non target species within a certain amount of time creates an unnecessary level of reporting beyond what the NWCO's already do. The trapping of non target species is infrequent occurrence. Finally, the reporting of non target species does not have anything thing to do with the protection of children from leg hold traps.

The current use of foothold traps in Connecticut meets the Best Management Practices (BMPs) established by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The most recent BMP research conducted in the North America represents the most detailed scientific evaluation of animal traps ever conducted. Traps were evaluated for a number of areas including: animal welfare, efficiency, selectivity, practicality and safety. The use of these BMPs and their importance are extensively covered in all of the formal trapping training courses(professional and recreational) here in CT and it is something that is viewed by our organization as the floor and not the ceiling in our daily routine of business.

The animals that these tools are used to manage can carry a number of diseases that are both a threat to humans and other species in the environment. Further, these animals unmanaged not only will have a negative impact on the natural environment but can also cause major damage to man-made

improvements such as roads, culverts and the structures that support bridges amongst other things which are often adjacent to a number of the restricted areas identified in this proposal.

Thank you for your time and attention to our concerns and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. For further information, please contact John C Larkin at 860 508 9924 or Alan Huot at 860 573 2201.