

**Planning & Development Committee
Public Hearing: 2/20/13**

**Testimony Concerning HB 6323
An Act Concerning Adoption Fees for Dogs**

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I would like to express my overall support of HB 6323, An Act Concerning Adoption Fees for Dogs. I believe it would be effective in encouraging and enabling Animal Control Officers (“ACOs”) to pre-sterilize animals before adopting them out, especially now that ACOs may also use the Department of Agriculture’s Animal Population Control Program (“APCP”) vouchers toward this purpose (CT Public Act 12-108). Many pro-active ACOs would like to take advantage of the APCP vouchers, but they do not have the funds to pay the balance whenever the voucher does not cover the entire cost of the surgery. Some ACOs are located close to low-cost clinics, but the vast majority of towns must use private veterinarians, which for them often can make pre-sterilization cost-prohibitive.

I do have two suggestions for amending this bill. First, I would like to propose we cap the adoption fee towns may charge. For dogs spayed or neutered while at the pound, a maximum adoption fee in the range of \$100 – 150 may be appropriate. This range is not as high as most other rescue and adoption non-profit organizations, which suggests it would not be high enough to discourage adoptions from the local pound.

I propose providing such a cap, because I fear the possibility that some municipalities may assert pressure on the local ACO to charge unreasonably high fees; and in this case, we could see sad circumstances of lowered adoption rates and increased euthanasia.

Secondly, I’d like to recommend expanding this bill to apply to cat adoption fees. In the wake of recent reports that blame outdoor, stray, and feral cats for the depletion of bird populations, it is more important than ever to ensure that cats do not leave shelters with the ability to reproduce. For cats sterilized at the pound, a maximum adoption fee in the range of \$50 – 75 may be appropriate.

Municipal pounds are a major source of unaltered animals. But if pro-active ACOs can recover the balance of spay/neuter costs that accumulate beyond the amount of the APCP vouchers, we will surely take large strides toward gaining control of the pet over-population problem.

Thank you for your consideration of our suggested amendments to this bill.