



February 19, 2013

TESTIMONY OF

PET INDUSTRY JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL

HOUSE BILL 6323

BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Position: Qualified Opposition

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) greatly appreciates the opportunity to address this committee on House Bill 6323. As the world's largest pet trade association, representing the interests of all segments of the pet industry throughout the United States, PIJAC counts among its thousands of members associations, organizations, corporations and individuals across the United States involved in the commercial pet trade. More specifically, PIJAC represents manufacturers, distributors, breeders and retailers throughout the state of Connecticut.

Nobody cares more about healthy and safe pets than does PIJAC. PIJAC has for many years provided a well-respected animal care certification program that is widely utilized by not only persons in the commercial pet trade but shelters and humane societies as well. Our association has long been recognized as the voice for a responsible pet trade, and we routinely advocate legislative and regulatory proposals establishing governmental mandates where appropriate to advance the public interest and welfare of pets. PIJAC works closely with USDA to ensure effective enforcement of the federal Animal Welfare Act, and has since its inception. We regularly work with other federal and state agencies to advance animal welfare interests.

PIJAC has been concerned about, and involved in, the so-called pet over-population issue for many years, although that term is somewhat of a misnomer. There is no shortage of the demand for puppies and kittens. Indeed, some shelters import puppies from out-of-state and even outside the United States in order to meet demands for adoptions. There is, however, a population of unwanted animals that represents a real cause for concern. Unfortunately, the population of unwanted dogs and cats is a complex issue which House Bill 6323 will not effectively address.

House Bill 6323 directly impacts the retail sellers of pet dogs and cats, and the pet owning public. We respectfully submit that it benefits neither those pet owners nor the public at large. Rather, the bill imposes spay/neuter costs on retail pet stores, which is an undue burden that should not be placed solely on these sellers and will drive up cost of pet animals for consumers.

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PIJAC respectfully urges the committee to hold this legislation for further study in order to develop a bill that will more reasonably target specific concerns without imposing excessive fees on pet sellers and pet owners.

We thank you for due consideration of our concerns, and would be pleased to provide the committee with further information or assistance as you deem beneficial in your deliberations.

Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council
By: Michael P. Maddox, Esq.