



Sen. Hartley, Rep. Dargan, Sen. Ayala, Rep. Verrengia, Sen. Guglielmo, Rep. Giegler and other distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver this testimony to your committee. My name is Gordon Willard and I am Executive Director of the Connecticut Humane Society. I'm here to testify in support of **HB6488, "AN ACT CONCERNING THE EVACUATION AND TEMPORARY SHELTERING OF CERTAIN ANIMALS DURING EMERGENCIES"**.

This proposal provides reporting requirements on a state and local level by establishing a protocol for the safe evacuation and sheltering of companion animals during natural disasters.

The Connecticut Humane Society (along with the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association) serves as a resource for town animal control offices looking to shelter (companion) animals during all types of emergencies. Despite this, no plans or reporting requirements are in place to ensure that sufficient shelter space is available throughout the state in the event of (a disaster when) referrals from towns exceed the CHS capacity during an emergency.

HB6488 provides for the necessary planning for companion animals by implementing the following changes:

- Require the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to include companion and service animals in their annual report.
- (Reintroduce the requirement to establish, document and provide shelter for companion animals during a disaster.)
- Add protocols for companion and service animals to the local and regional emergency response plans.
- Add local and state animal humane organizations to local planning advisory councils to assist with established protocols.

- Add a category to Local Government Situation forms for the reporting on evacuation measures for sheltering nonmilitary companion and service animals.

Background on Companion Animal Emergency Preparedness in Connecticut

The legislature and Governor approved a bill that required any emergency evacuation plan to include pet evacuation plans under the statutory definition of "civil preparedness". The passage of this act (Public Act 07-11) represents evacuation plans but does not represent requirements for sheltering (of companion animals) or the ability to report on the response provided for companion animals during natural disasters.

CHS has collaboratively collected information on a state, local and private provider level and is confident that this proposal is a strong step in enhancing the coordination amongst emergency responders, animal shelters (and others incorporated into the response protocols.)

Thank you for listening to my testimony and for considering favorably approving HB6488. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding my testimony.