

To: The Honorable Members of the Environment Committee

Re: SB 1018 - ACC Enforcement of Environmental Conservation Laws that would legalize the use of snare traps

Date: March 7, 2013

Dear Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee:

Please accept this letter as my testimony for the public hearing scheduled for 3/8/13 regarding the potential legalization of "Collarum" and similar animal snare traps. While manufacturers claim these devices trap wild animals in "humane" fashion, I strongly disagree and urge you to **OPPOSE the provision within SB 1018 that would legalize these devices. Please assure CT voters that snare traps will remain illegal.** This issue is not only important to me and my family, but to voting friends and neighbors, and all the wild and domestic animals within our community.

Despite what manufacturers tell us, snare traps are not only torturous devices, but are indiscriminate in their cruelty. We share our forests and fields with dogs, horses and the very wildlife whose natural behavior snare traps are intended to curtail. While I routinely harness and leash my pets and keep to designated hiking and biking trails, countless others allow theirs to roam free. If snares are legalized, thousands of innocent animals - wild and domestic, fawns to fisher cats - will be at risk of injuries that cause dehydration, starvation, self-mutilation, disease, loss of limbs, skin, fur and feathers, prolonged exposure to the elements and untimely deaths. If snare traps become legal, can anyone guarantee that they will be checked in a timely fashion? Who will handle trapped (thus dangerous) animals and treat their wounds? And who can assure that, rather than killing their victims and disposing of them where no one will see, trappers will actually relocate wild animals to suitable habitats?

There are better ways to resolve problems brought on by expanding populations and shrinking habitats. Enacting and enforcing humane animal control policies and providing adequate training for our Animal Control Officers (ACOs) are key. Rather than legitimize barbaric devices, let's give Connecticut's pet owners, ACOs and policy makers unbiased information about what works and what doesn't. Rather than buy into commercial marketing ploys, let's foster compassionate choices and encourage future generations to do likewise. No matter what manufacturers would have us believe, snares are not only cruel, but violent - and **violence is violence, whether perpetrated by assault weapons, or by invisible snares deliberately set to snap tight around the necks and limbs of animals in their nesting and feeding areas.**

We can encourage CT residents to become better guardians of our precious wildlife and natural resources by teaching them about the dangers of allowing pets to roam free. We can promote humane training, leashing, fencing and other proven methods for keeping pets, humans and wildlife healthy and safe. We can help our friends and colleagues understand the vital roles wild animals fulfill on our planet. They are not "pests". They are assets to society who depend on us for their continuing survival.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Annie Chittenden, Neck Road, Madison, CT