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Testimony of Representative Patricia Dillon
Environment Committee February 19, 2014

**in Support of HB 5079 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS
FOR THE SHELTERING OF LOST ANIMALS FOLLOWING SEVERE WEATHER
EMERGENCIES.**

Good morning Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, and other distinguished members of the Environment Committee. I am testifying in qualified support of HB 5079.

Hurricane Sandy and other extreme storms caused damage to homes, property, and the Connecticut economy. One painful outcome was the displacement and loss of household pets. In many cases the animals lost their identification in flood waters, so that even when the pets survived, their owners were difficult to trace. Pets were brought to local shelters. These shelters had varying policies, and many families did not know where to turn to find their pets.

In an attempt to plan for the future, I filed two proposed bills, HB 5008 and HB 5010. These proposed bills are related to the bill before you, though they differ.

On the measure before you, I would suggest that any legislation on this matter be permissive, not mandatory, for two reasons, both involving uncertainty. First, these measures were prompted by events of recent storms. In future storms, the facts on the ground could change, and the executive branch would need flexibility to respond. Second, it appeared that the Congressional process for allocating dollars needed for relief took longer than expected. If needed dollars are delayed, further mandates could thwart relief efforts.

I ask the committee to approve this proposed legislation out of committee as a work in progress to allow me to work with the Department of Agriculture and OPM on an achievable proposal that will provide relief in the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Representative Pat Dillon