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On behalf of the Pet Industry Distributors Association (PIDA), a national trade association representing wholesaler-distributors, livestock wholesalers and pet product manufacturers, thank you for the opportunity to offer our views on Senate Bill 445.

Since our founding in 1968, PIDA has focused on promoting progress in the pet industry. Our mission is to work cooperatively with suppliers and retail customers in fostering and strengthening the human-companion animal bond.

We at PIDA know firsthand the level of attention and care that independent retailers provide to the animals they sell. In 2008, we launched Pet Store Pro. It has since been used by more than 16,000 store owners, managers and sales associates from more than 4,000 stores nationwide, including 54 here in Connecticut. One of the many benefits this free resource offers to independent pet retailers is a catalog of online training courses for managers and sales associates covering everything from pet retail basics to customer service and pet nutrition. Pet Store Pro includes nine animal-specific care courses focused on dogs, cats, birds, freshwater fish, saltwater fish, lizards, snakes, turtles and tortoises and small animals.

In following the hearings held by the recently concluded Task Force, we were concerned by the prejudice against commercial breeders and local retailers demonstrated time and again by several members of the Task Force. Frankly, the fact that a Task Force established to discuss retail sales of dogs and cats failed to include even a single retailer among its members was a disappointment.

Actions that affect retailers have a significant ripple effect on distributors and manufacturers throughout the state and across the country. PIDA applauds the Environment Committee for looking at the entirety of the data presented during the Task Force and crafting legislation that seeks to accomplish the stated goal of ensuring the humane treatment of cats and dogs without driving quality local retailers out of business.

On behalf of our 180 distributor and manufacturer member corporations, we urge you to continue to consider the significant, unintended consequences of legislation on retailers, distributors and manufacturers as you move forward with this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Steve King  
President, Pet Industry Distributors Association

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