

**Testimony Concerning HB 5707**  
**Environment Committee, March 20, 2015**  
**CHELSEA MCDERMOTT**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of HB 5707.

I am the Assistant Animal Control Officer for the town of Mansfield, CT. In my line of work, we often field complaints of dogs that are forced to live outside by their owners. As long as the dog has food, water, "shelter", and the dog is healthy, there is no action that can be taken. The law, as written, does not define what "shelter" is considered; a tarp, piece of plywood, shade from the nearest tree, can all be defended by owners as their dog's "shelter"

In my town, we have several residents that own "outside dogs". When following up on dog licenses, I often see the conditions in which these dogs live. While some are kenneled with dog houses and heat, others are left with upside-down kiddie pools strapped to two pieces of plywood on top of a rotten pallet. This leaves much to be desired in terms of shelter from the elements. It is this type of practice that we can stop by defining what "shelter" means. We must think of the animals and their quality of life.

I am proposing that a law be written to define "shelter" for dogs outside. A shelter should be raised up off the ground, give protection from rain, snow, wind, cold and heat, allow the dog to comfortably turn around and lay down inside the shelter, and be lined with a type of material that offers some comfort to the dog (ie: straw or hay).

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Chelsea McDermott  
Mansfield Animal Control  
860-487-0137