



Environment Committee

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Testimony by

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University of Connecticut

HB 5707

**AN ACT REQUIRING CERTAIN HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES THAT
CONDUCT RESEARCH USING CATS OR DOGS TO OFFER SUCH CATS OR DOGS
TO ANIMAL RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS PRIOR TO EUTHANIZING ANY SUCH
CAT OR DOG**

The University of Connecticut and UConn Health would like to provide the following background and comments on HB 5707. This bill would require higher education institutions to offer for adoption any cat or dog that the institution “possesses for the purpose of conducting research or testing” after completion of the research.

The University of Connecticut and UConn Health currently do not own any dogs or cats that are used in laboratory research.

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUCs) already established at Storrs and UConn Health are charged with responsibility for the humane care and use of animals in research and teaching. These committees are created by and subject to federal law: the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (PHS 1986), the USDA Animal Welfare Act and Regulations (CFR 1985) and related Guides. Members include scientists and nonscientists, veterinarians and nonaffiliated individuals from the community. Members are appointed by the University President on recommendation of the Vice President for Research.

At this time, the Storrs campus has only one approved IACUC protocol for research involving dogs: The Interaction between Herding Dogs and Livestock. This research involves observation and video recordings of interactions between dogs and herding animals; it does not involve any invasive research techniques of any nature. Additionally, as inferred above, UConn does not own the dogs that participate in this research, therefore it is not possible for the University to place these dogs up

for adoption. These dogs are all privately owned and therefore return home with the owner at the end of their use.

At UConn we take animal welfare very seriously and restrict animal use in research to that where it is both necessary and of high value. In the unlikely circumstance that laboratory research necessitated the use of dogs or cats, administrators would work with researchers and the IACUC to develop and approve an appropriate protocol. Only purpose bred dogs and cats from USDA licensed vendors would be used.

Should this bill move forward, the University would like to work with the Committee to ensure that the language of the legislation: clearly differentiates privately-owned animals from institution-owned animals used in research (i.e. change “possesses” to “owns” on line 14 of the Committee Bill); does not impact teaching protocols; does not conflict with existing federal laws and guidelines; and allows for the recognition that research animals are not always best suited for adoption, depending on the research conducted on them. Thank you.