

**Testimony Presented to the
Environment Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly**

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Paul R. Pescatello, JD, PhD

H.B. No. 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 and Providing for the Proper Sheltering of Dogs**

Good afternoon Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, Senator Moore, Representative Arconti, Senator Chapin, Representative Shaban, members of the Environment Committee.

I'm Paul Pescatello, here today as Chair of the Connecticut Bioscience Growth Council.

I am also President/CEO of the New England Biotechnology Association and Chair of We Work for Health Connecticut.

The Connecticut Bioscience Growth Council is a committee of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association's biotech and biopharma members.

The Bioscience Growth Council was formed as a means to foster collaboration both among Connecticut biotech and biopharma companies themselves and, just as importantly, *with* our state. As you know, Connecticut – *this* General Assembly – has chosen wisely to invest in the life sciences as a foundation for Connecticut's 21st century economy and as a means to create a broad spectrum of jobs.

The strides we have made in regenerative medicine and stem cell research, and the research and economic development already being accomplished by Jackson Labs, names only a few of the dividends generated by this Connecticut investment.

I am here to speak with regard to H.B. No. 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 and Providing for the Proper Sheltering of Dogs.

Section One of the bill would require institutions of higher education to offer for adoption, by "animal rescue" organizations, any dog or cat used for research purposes when such research is concluded.

Though the Bioscience Growth Council believes this section is well intentioned and applauds the evident concern it represents, we conclude Section One of the bill is unnecessary, duplicative of a very effective and comprehensive body of existing regulation and animal care practice, and that it be deleted from H.B. No. 5707.

The regulation and practice to which I refer involves no fewer than four layers.

First is the Federal Animal Welfare Act. This law, which has been continuously updated since enacted in 1966, governs, among other animals, dogs and cats used in research.

Second is the approximately 164 pages of U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations promulgated under the Animal Welfare Act, together with the approximately 424 additional pages that comprise the USDA's Animal Welfare Guide, which is used by the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to inspect facilities which use animals in research.

The Animal Welfare Act and U.S.D.A. regulations require registration and licensing of entities using animals in research, annual Animal Welfare Act compliance reports - these reports are public and available on the U.S.D.A. website - annual inspections of facilities, and generally govern all aspects of humane care – handling, housing, space, feeding, sanitation, shelter, veterinary care and handling in transit.

Organizations governed under the Animal Welfare Act must establish a specialized committee – an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) – that includes at least one veterinarian and one person unaffiliated with the organization who represents the community interest. These committees regularly assess animal care, treatment and practices used in research. They are required to inspect all animal study areas at least once every six months and prepare reports which are provided to the senior leadership of the organization and U.S.D.A. inspectors. They are required as well to ensure that scientific justification for use of animals in research be provided and that alternatives to animal use in experimentation be used whenever possible.

A second layer of regulation requires every institution that uses animals in research, and receives any federal funds for such research, such as institutions of higher education, must have an IACUC. Each IACUC continually reviews research protocols and conducts inspections and evaluations of an institution's animal care and use.

In addition, organizations which receive Public Health Service (PHS) funding – this is mostly institutions of higher education who receive funding from federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – must adhere to PHS policies aimed at ensuring appropriate care and use of animals used in biomedical and behavioral research and report their compliance with these policies at least annually.

The third layer of animal care regulations consists of voluntary accreditations. The Association For Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratories Animal Care International (AAALAC) is the premier private, non-profit organization that works to ensure humane treatment of animals used in scientific research. AAALAC-accredited institutions must demonstrate that they meet standards outlined in AAALAC's 247-page *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*. The standards in the AAALAC Guide are generally considered to go above and beyond what is required by law. The AAALAC Guide is written by the National Research Council of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. It is my understanding that Yale, the University of Connecticut and all of Connecticut's biopharma companies are AAALAC accredited.

The fourth layer of oversight lies with our own Connecticut General Statutes (Sec. 22-332), which licenses facilities to maintain and operate a laboratory for utilization of living dogs in medicine and research.

This extensive multi-layered body of regulation covers the handling of animals which, essentially, covers the procurement, handling, use and disposition, such as placement for adoption, of animals used in research. But it is important to note that the nature of – perhaps the most important aspect of – animal research is getting

the best and most scientifically-significant information from each and every animal on study. In most cases this means examination of the animals' tissues and organs post-mortem.

I would like to state in the strongest terms that when it is appropriate to place research animals for adoptions they are; and new *homes* are found with relative ease among the people who know the animals best. It is my understanding that in the case of the relatively few animals where adoption out of the research facility is appropriate, homes are readily found for them among the research staff and employees of the organizations which conducted research on the animals, continuing the positive personal relationship that research staff has with the animals in their care. Indeed, I am told there are more requests by such employees than there are animals to fill them. Given their familiarity and understanding of the needs of research animals, these employees are ideally suited to be adopters.

It is not an overstatement to say Connecticut has built a *world* renowned life sciences sector. As our economy changes, as innovation and intellectual property creation become drivers of our economic competitiveness, the cluster of academic research organizations, early stage biotechs and larger biopharma companies has become key to building a new base of rewarding jobs and careers for Connecticut.

We have made such a good name for ourselves in the life sciences with sound and rational policies to govern research and development. Connecticut is a place where life sciences research and development must be done to the highest ethical standards – to the letter and, as importantly, to the spirit of the law. A corollary is that we are more in sync than many other states and locales with the aims of the scientists and research organizations – to find life saving treatments and cures – and that we will not get in the way of research and development with unnecessary or duplicative regulations.

Section One of HB 5707 is unnecessary given the effective body of existing law and regulation I have outlined and, as such, is counterproductive to building the life sciences cluster upon which we have placed so much hope.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have or expand on any points I've made.