

“Testimony in Support of HB 5707 - Proper Dog Sheltering

Dear Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

My name is Tracy Beck. I live in Redding, CT (Sherman Turnpike), have a weekend cottage in New Preston / Washington CT and a rental property in New Milford CT. As a CT constituent, I am here to support the Bill to require proper shelter for dogs who are left outdoors or otherwise confined. I will freely admit, that whilst I am a resident of CT, I cannot really speak for sheltering conditions here in CT, but I am the Office Manager at a rescue facility in Central New York State and just in 2014 alone, we were involved in two separate confiscations from dog breeders with horrific sheltering / living conditions., so whilst I “hope” that CT doesn’t really have horror stories – though I am sure others here today will illustrate such cases - I do see that CT can play a huge role in leadership and setting the example so that other States may follow for conditions to be improved nationwide. I am here today to urge you members of this Committee to joint favorably report HB 5707, the Proper Dog Sheltering Bill.

Whilst the conditions as defined in the Bill seem reasonable and many groups hopefully operate within these guidelines generally, there are other affects I’d like to bring to your attention that we have witnessed at our rescue facility.

46 border collies came to our rescue working with the SPCA in Jan 2014. Whilst the dogs lived in barrels outside (shelter), water provided (that was frozen in the winter), food thrown to them for free-feeding, tied to chains so lack of movement, their living conditions as a whole created serious health and mental problems. Malnutrition, under-socialisation, health issues beyond you can imagine, fear of humans, to generalize just a few. These dogs cost us \$60,000 in two months just in vet bills and treatments – we survive on gracious public donors. The care of them halted our basic operation of rescuing and adopting out for two months to focus just on these dogs, while we had 40 others already in our rescue put on “hold”. All of the 46 eventually had to be placed in foster care to give them the nurturing, reprogramming, socialization they needed to become “adoptable” and I am pleased to report that all but 3 dogs have now been successfully adopted to loving forever homes.

Our second case of 5 dogs from Indiana in Sept 2014, also had “adequate” sheltering living in kennels within a barn, but their kennels were overcrowded, sodden with feces (even up the walls), empty dog food bags piled high in the barn for rats and mice to congregate, syringes left on top of barrels –absolutely deplorable! Those dogs are also in foster, but here are some of their comments just recently after 6 months...

(age 2) if she has an accident in the house, she will try to eat her feces or drink her urine;
(age 6) because she has no concept of how to communicate with a human, she cannot ask for anything for herself. There is no tail wag, there is not panting, there is not relaxation;
and there are more examples I can give you.

Health Departments, Animal Health Boards, Humane Societies, Animal Control and Sheriff Departments have all been involved in both cases. Both owners are being proceeded through court; not only time, but potentially unnecessary huge amounts of money are being spent on such cases. That is a whole other story and one I am not and cannot cover today.

So, having been a part of these dogs' journeys from where they've come from to the possibilities they now have, it inspired me to speak up for Animals, so I signed up with the ASPCA to be a part of their advocacy group. That was 5 months ago, and I feel I have now gone from 0-60 in 5 secs in attending the ASPCA CT Voices for Animals Day here just two weeks ago, followed now by this Hearing. So to consider this Bill, Proper Shelter for Dogs, really is only the tip of the iceberg. Without it, all of the above I can only imagine is even worse.

I apologise for the simplicity of this testimony to keep it brief so that others may have the chance to talk, and it may not have many stats and facts, particularly relevant to CT - I am very new to this, but it pulls at my heart which is why I now stand before you and will be willing to provide any information necessary, or provide support as best I can for this Committee to Joint Favorably Report the "proper shelter bill".

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Tracy Beck
CT Resident
NY volunteer