The Department of Agriculture is supportive of first responders, as listed in the bill, rendering emergency medical assistance to animals in need and being protected from liability in doing so.

However, Animal Control Officers who are often among those who first respond to animals needing emergency medical assistance are not specifically included among the first responders as listed in the language of the bill. In fact, Animal Control Officers are trained in providing first aid for injured animals; in animal health and disease recognition; and in the humane care and treatment of animals (C.G.S. §22-328). Furthermore, Animal Control Officers have the statutory responsibility to impound any dog found injured on any highway, neglected, abandoned or cruelly treated and to provide such with appropriate veterinary care (C.G.S. §22-332).

The Department urges the Committee to include Animal Control Officers in the language of Committee Bill No. 6038 as first responders rendering emergency medical assistance to animals along with firefighters, police officers and EMS personnel in order to provide them with similar liability protection.