



ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

March 11, 2019

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent 99% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

Testimony submitted by: Susan S. Bransfield, First Selectwoman, Town of Portland and Immediate Past President of CCM

H.B. 7297 "An Act Concerning Quarantine and Disposal Orders of Animal Control Officers."

Good morning Chairwoman Cohen and Chairman Demicco, Vice Chairs Kushner and Gresko, Ranking Members Miner and Harding, and members of the committee.

My name is Susan Bransfield and I am the First Selectwoman in the Town of Portland. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of H.B. 7297, An Act Concerning Quarantine and Disposal Orders of Animal Control Officers.**

Over the last few months I have had the honor of participating in a working group that included staff from the Department of Agriculture (DoAg), State and Municipal Animal Control Officers, Veterinarians, Animal Advocates, and a Dog Bite Victim. The goal of the working group was to clarify and provide municipal animal control officers with additional guidance and parameters when issuing restraint and disposal orders on biting or attacking animals pursuant to C.G.S. §22-358.

During our working group discussions regarding the clarification of C.G.S. §22-358, consensus among the group was that the language pertaining to the quarantine of biting dogs for the purpose of observation for the clinical signs of rabies, should be moved to C.G.S. §22-359, the provisions of which provide for the control of rabies.

Additionally the bill provides the following improvements to the current process, providing timely relief to dog bite victims, dog owners, municipalities, and the DoAg:

1. Revised language in C.G.S. §22-358 and C.G.S. §22-359 to be gender neutral
2. Strengthened existing language concerning the killing of an animal while it is in the act of attacking.



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3. Established criteria for an animal control officer to consider when contemplating the issuance of a restraint or disposal order. The criteria where by the issuance of a restraint or disposal order is necessary include:
 - a. the ability of the owner to control the animal,
 - b. the severity of the injuries,
 - c. the viciousness of the attack,
 - d. whether the attack occurred on or off the property where the animal is kept,
 - e. whether the animal was provoked, and
 - f. whether the animal was protecting its owner.
4. Requirement on the municipality in which the attack occurred to meet with the dog owner and victim to attempt to resolve any dispute surrounding an order prior to appealing the order to the commissioner.
5. Preservation rights of an aggrieved party to appeal to the commissioner and ultimately the superior court, by upholding requirements under the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act.

Overall, I, along with members of the working group, support H.B. 7277 as it appropriately assists animal control officers in issuing restraint or disposal orders and improves the process by which disputes surrounding an order are settled, reducing the number of appeals to the DoAg adjudicated through the administrative hearing process.

Thank you for your time and attention today, I would be happy to answer any questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan S. Bransfield".

Susan S. Bransfield
First Selectwoman
Town of Portland
Immediate Past President of CCM