

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-296

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE ENFORCEMENT OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE GENERAL STATUTES CONCERNING

Title: ROAMING LIVESTOCK.

Vote Date: 3/20/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/15/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Environment Committee
Rep. Craig C. Fishbein, 90th Dist.
Sen. Heather S. Somers, 18th Dist.
Rep. Aundre Bumgardner, 41st Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Roaming livestock present unique challenges. They can impede traffic, damage property, and engage in felonious behaviors towards others. Current law imposes fines on individuals whose livestock engage in such acts, however recent developments in the town of Sterling have led to large wild hog populations terrorizing the town, and the increasing fine amount on the original owner has had its court date continually pushed back. Further study into the enforcement mechanisms might produce a solution to the issue.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Representative Anne Dauphinais, 44th District:

Representative Dauphinais testified that livestock roaming freely can present a range of challenges and hazards to public safety, property, and the animals themselves. Although there already exist provisions to address these concerns, it is their belief that there are gaps in enforcement and implementation. The Representative feels we owe our resident, and our rural community members, to establish a task force to develop recommendations to address the issue of roaming livestock.

John Fichak, Executive Director, Northeast Connecticut Council of Governments:

NECCOG has in place the state's largest animal control program – covering 21 towns, 2 tribal nations and the US Naval Submarine Base. Each year their program addresses hundreds of domestic animal issues – primarily dealing with dogs and cats. Their investigations include cruelty, noise, odors, property damage, and roaming. In nearly all instances of either a roaming dog or livestock, the situation is resolved without the need for formal enforcement action. However, there are instances where the issuance of a ticket and possible infraction fine does not correct the situation.

The NECCOG believe that some form of mandatory mediation what is needed. Other states have such systems to enable these unique cases to be resolved in a timely manner. They suggest that Section 1 of the bill be amended to change lines 7 and 8 to read "one of whom has expertise in municipal or regional animal control" and "one of whom is engaged in production agriculture involving livestock".

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, COST

Although it is COST's belief that most owners of livestock are responsible in ensuring that their animals don't get loose or in securing them quickly if they do, they note there have been some incidents in our rural towns where roaming livestock are creating public safety concerns. Unfortunately, in situations involving cases where an owner is not responding to repeated complaints or tickets that their livestock is roaming, there is little recourse. COST support the establishment of a task force to develop recommendations to help address this issue.

Ava Schrage:

The testifier solely expressed support for the bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Angel Horton

The testifier solely expressed opposition to the bill.

Reported by: Judy Ganswindt

Date: April 2nd, 2024