

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

HB 5801 PA 243 1996

Sen. 3201-3206, 3261-3262,
4574-4575, 5094-5095, 5097-5098 (14)

Hse. 808, 2477-2525, 4368-4376,
4830, 6131-6135 (65)

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SENATE

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Senate

Wednesday, May 1, 1996

003201

SEN. PRAGUE:

Mr. President.

SEN. UPSON:

I'm asking for a PT.

THE CHAIR:

Asking for a PT? So noted.

THE CLERK:

Calendar 500, HB5703, File 591, 728, An Act
Authorizing the City of New Britain to Issue Bonds to
Fund the Unfunded Liability in its Policemen's and
Firemen's Retirement System, as amended by House
Amendment Schedule "A". Favorable Report of the
Committee on Finance.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Upson.

SEN. UPSON:

Senator Prague yielded to me. If I may mark a PR
please.

THE CHAIR:

So noted.

THE CLERK:

Page 10, Calendar 507, Substitute for HB5801, File
328 and 725, An Act Concerning Feral Cats and Bengal
Cats as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A" and
"B". Favorable Report of the Committee on Environment

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Senate

Wednesday, May 1, 1996 003202

and Planning and Development. The Clerk has two amendments.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Cook.

SEN. COOK:

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I would move adoption of the bill in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SEN. COOK:

Thank you. I would like to consider rejection of House Amendment "B" and I would so move.

THE CHAIR:

Motion to reject amendment "B". All those in favor signify by saying "aye".

ASSEMBLY:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? The ayes have it. Will you remark further on the bill.

SEN. COOK:

I have no amendments, but perhaps other do.

THE CLERK:

Senator Smith and Senator Daily.

SEN. UPSON:

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Senate

Wednesday, May 1, 1996

003203

Mr. President, may the Chamber be at ease for a second?

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Would the Chamber please stand at ease.

Will the Senate please come back to order.

Senator Daily.

SEN. DAILY:

Thank you, Mr. President. I would ask the Clerk to call LCO6120.

SEN. UPSON:

Mr. President, we're still at ease for a second, please.

THE CHAIR:

We just called back to order. Do you want to stand at ease again?

SEN. UPSON:

Yes, until we have --

THE CHAIR:

Senate please stand at ease. Will the Senate come to order. Senator Daily. Senator Smith.

SEN. SMITH:

Thank you, Mr. President. I apologize. If there are any amendments with my name on it, could they please be withdrawn.

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Senate

Wednesday, May 1, 1996

003204

THE CHAIR:

So noted. Senator Daily.

SEN. DAILY:

Thank you, Mr. President. I would urge adoption of this amendment and seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Will the Clerk please call the amendment?

THE CLERK:

Senate Amendment Schedule "A", LCO6120 offered by Senator Daily.

SEN. DAILY:

Thank you. I would again seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Do you move adoption, Senator Daily?

SEN. DAILY:

I move adoption of the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Proceed, please.

SEN. DAILY:

This amounts to basically a technical revision to the statutes which exist and spells out more clearly the way in which veterinarians have to release and post notice and give notice of dogs and cats in their possession.

I would urge adoption of the amendment.

pat

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Senate

Wednesday, May 1, 1996 003205

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further? The motion is to adopt Senate "A". Will you remark further? All those in favor signify by saying "aye".

ASSEMBLY:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? So ordered. On the bill. Will you remark further on the bill? Senator Cook.

SEN. COOK:

Thank you, Mr. President. On the underlying bill, I would urge its adoption in the form that the Senate has presented it.

THE CHAIR:

The adoption has been moved. Will you remark further?

SEN. COOK:

If there is not --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Prague.

SEN. PRAGUE:

Thank you, Mr. President. Through you to Senator Cook.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Cook.

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Senate

Wednesday, May 1, 1996

003206

SEN. PRAGUE:

Senator Cook, is there anything in this legislation that concerns the rabies vaccination of, is it the bengal cats?

SEN. COOK:

Through you, Mr. President, we stripped the amendment regarding bengal cats in the action of this Chamber of removing House Amendment "B". That is removed from the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Prague.

SEN. PRAGUE:

Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you, Senator Cook.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further?

SEN. COOK:

If there's no further discussion, I'll move this to the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Any further remarks? Hearing none, so ordered.

THE CLERK:

Page 13, Calendar 112, File 45, Substitute for SB104, An Act Concerning Time for Filing Tax Lists as amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A", "B", "C" and

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Senate

Wednesday, May 1, 1996 003261

Will you remark?

SEN. UPSON:

Without objection, I'd place this on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered.

SEN. UPSON:

Can we now run the Consent Calendar?

THE CHAIR:

Would the Clerk please announce a roll call vote on the Consent Calendar.

THE CLERK:

An immediate roll call in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. All Senators return to the Chamber.

An immediate roll call in the Senate on the Consent Calendar. All Senators please return to the Chamber.

Page 4, Calendar 419. SB 550
HB 5349 HB 5481 HB 5593

Page 7, Calendar 477, 479, 484.

Page 8, Calendar 485. HB 5368

Page 9, Calendar 496. HB 5550

Page 10, Calendar 507. HB 5801

Page 16, Calendar 327. SB 633

Page 18, Calendar 430. SB 266

Page 19, Calendar 151, 215 and 239. SB 33 SB 226 SB 495

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Senate

Wednesday, May 1, 1996 003262

Page 20, HB 5085
Calendar 390.

Page 21, SR 46 and HJ 19
Calendar 424 and 458.

THE CHAIR:

The machine will be open. Have all members voted?
Senator Ciotto? Have all members voted? If all
members have voted, the machine will be locked. The
Clerk please take a tally. The Clerk please announce
the tally.

THE CLERK:

Total number voting, 34; necessary for passage,
18. Those voting "yea", 34; those voting "nay", zero.

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar is adopted.

THE CLERK:

Senator Upson, which PTs do you want?

SEN. UPSON:

First of all, thank you for honoring me with that
request. Calendar 305 I want to PT that. I want to PT
that, 305. All right? It's already PTd.

Moving on to Calendar 403 on Page 4, I'd like to
PR that. That's Calendar 403 on Page 4.

Moving on 480 which is Page 7, that would be a Go,
for a Child Day Care Services. I believe that would be
Senator Nielsen. Do you want more?

THE CLERK:

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Senate

Monday, May 6, 1996 004574

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Harp. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not, would the Clerk please announce a roll call vote. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members voted? If all members have voted, the machine will be locked. The Clerk please take a tally.

THE CLERK:

Total number voting, 36; necessary for passage, 19. Those voting "yea", 19; those voting "nay", 17.

THE CHAIR:

The bill as amended is passed. At this time, the Chair would like to appoint members to Conference Committees. On Substitute HB5801, File 378 and 725, Senate Calendar 507, An Act Concerning Feral Cats and

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Senate

Monday, May 6, 1996

004575

Bengal Cats. Senator Paul Munns, Senator Kathy Cook, and Senator Melodie Peters.

On another item before us is Substitute SB608, File 407, Senate Calendar 309, An Act Concerning Family Support Magistrates, Senator Upson, Senator Kissel and Senator Looney.

Would the members of those Conference Committees meet with your counterparts in the House and report back as soon as possible.

Senator Fleming.

THE CLERK:

Page 3, Calendar 391, Substitute for HB5321, File 285 and 537, An Act Designating a Section of Interstate Route 95 as the Jewish War Veterans Memorial Highway, Designating a Section of Interstate Route 384 as State Trooper Russell A. Bagshaw Highway and naming the bridge over the Yantic River on Route 82 in Norwich, the Thomas F. Sweeney Bridge, as amended by House Amendment "A". Favorable Report of the Committee on Transportation.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fleming.

SEN. FLEMING:

Yes, Madam President, I would ask that that item be passed temporarily.

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Senate

Wednesday, May 8, 1996 005094

that item be placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered.

SEN. FLEMING:

On Calendar Page 27, Calendar 418. Madam President, I would move that that item be placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered.

SEN. FLEMING:

Calendar 480. Madam President, I would move that
that item be placed on the Consent Calendar.

HB 5769

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered. Senator Fleming.

SEN. FLEMING:

Calendar 309, Madam.

On Calendar Page, Madam President, could I just return to Calendar item 418, and remove that from the Consent Calendar?

THE CHAIR:

That item is removed from the Consent Calendar.

SEN. FLEMING:

And Madam President, have we done Calendar item
507 yet, on Calendar Page 28?

HB 5801

THE CHAIR:

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Senate

Wednesday, May 8, 1996

005095

No sir.

SEN. FLEMING:

Then Madam President, on Calendar Page 28,
Calendar item 507, I would move that item to the
Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered. Senator Fleming,
you actually mentioned Calendar 309 but made no motion
on that, was that?

SEN. FLEMING:

I did not intend to make a motion on that Madam
President. Madam President, for the benefit of the
members the remaining items are marked Go. Madam
President?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fleming.

SEN. FLEMING:

Yes, Madam President, just for the benefit of the
members, so that they're aware, on Calendar Page 28,
Calendar 507, which was moved and placed on the Consent
Calendar, I would just want members to be aware that
that is a Conference Committee Report.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you Senator Fleming, and it was noted
without objection, it is on the Consent Calendar.

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Senate

Wednesday, May 8, 1996

005097

Page 23, Calendar 133, Substitute for SB282.

Page 23, Calendar 142, SB519.

Page 23, Calendar 164, no I'm sorry 169,

Substitute for 204.

Page 23, Calendar 195, SB344.

Page 24, Calendar 246, Substitute for SB665.

Page 24, Calendar 259, HB5363.

Page 25, Calendar 290, Substitute for SB212.

Page 25, Calendar 327, Substitute for 633.

Page 25, Calendar 339, SB670.

Page 25, Calendar 372, Substitute for SB524.

Page 26, Calendar 396, Substitute for SB404.

Page 26, Calendar 412, Substitute for SB509.

Page 27, Calendar 480, HB5769.

Page 28, Calendar 507, Substitute for HB5801.

THE CHAIR:

Would the Clerk please announce a roll call vote,
the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Roll call in the Senate. All Senators return to
the Chamber. Roll call in the Senate. Will all
Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members voted? If all members have
voted, the machine will be locked. Clerk please take a

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Senate

Wednesday, May 8, 1996 005098

tally.

THE CLERK:

Total Number Voting	36
Necessary for Passage	19
Those Voting Yea	36
Those Voting Nay	0

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar is adopted. At this time the Chair will entertain points of personal privilege or announcements. Senator Smith.

SEN. SMITH:

Thank you Madam President. I rise for a point of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SEN. SMITH:

Thank you Madam President. Joining us here today in the chamber is Patrick Friar, who served with myself and Senator Somma as a college intern this year. He's from UConn. He was an immense help to my office, and I would yield to Senator Somma for further comments.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Somma, do you accept the yield?

SEN. SOMMA:

Thank you Madam President. Just to echo what

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House of Representatives

Tuesday, April 9, 1996

DEPUTY SPEAKER HARTLEY:

Representative Lyons.

REP. LYONS: (146TH)

Madam Speaker, I would move that House Bill Number 5232 be referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

DEPUTY SPEAKER HARTLEY:

The motion is to refer to the Committee on Appropriations. Without objection, so ordered.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 269?

CLERK:

On page 12, Calendar 269, Substitute for House Bill Number 5801, AN ACT CONCERNING FERAL CATS.

Favorable Report of the Committee on Environment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER HARTLEY:

Representative Lyons.

REP. LYONS: (146TH)

Madam Speaker, I would make a motion that House Bill Number 5801 be referred to the Committee on Planning and Development.

DEPUTY SPEAKER HARTLEY:

The motion is to refer to Planning and Development. Without objection, so ordered.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 270?

CLERK:

On page 13, Calendar 270, House Bill Number 5238,

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House of Representatives

April 25, 1996

Calendar and call Calendar 269?

THE CLERK:

Page 28, Calendar 269, Substitute for HB No. 5801,
An Act Concerning Feral Cats. Favorable report of the
Committee on Planning and Development.

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mushinsky, will you remark?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move acceptance of the Joint Committees
favorable report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER NORTON:

The question is on acceptance and adoption. Will
you remark?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Clerk has an amendment LCO 5815. Would the
Clerk please call and may I be permitted to summarize?

SPEAKER NORTON:

If the Clerk has in his possession LCO No. 5815,
will he please call? It shall be designated House
Amendment A.

THE CLERK:

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House of Representatives

April 25, 1996

LCO NO. 5815, House A, offered by Representative
Mushinsky.

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Mr. Speaker, may I summarize?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Please do summarize.

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This amendment makes a number of changes to the bill. It adds commercial zones to the areas that municipalities may control nuisance cats.

It deletes Section 2, which concerned optional licensing of cats by municipalities. It applies property damage and public health standards to own cats, not just feral cats maintained by a keeper.

It narrows the authority of animal control officers to round up cats. It limits that authority to those cats causing damage or unsanitary conditions.

It permits the Commissioner to solicit -- the Commissioner of Agriculture to solicit donations for feral cat control in the spay-neuter fund and it extends existing protection for owners against improper round-up of dogs in 22-335 to their cats. So the same protection would apply to dogs or cats.

I move adoption of the amendment.

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SPEAKER NORTON:

Do you have a second? The question's on adoption -- the question's on adoption. Will you remark further?

If there are no -- Representative Gyle.

REPRESENTATIVE GYLE: (108th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It said that people either love cats or they hate cats. Well, it's easy to love a kitten, but it's hard not to be terrified of a feral cat. And for those of you who think that this isn't a very important bill to do, I hope none of you or any of your loved ones are ever bitten by a cat and are worried about rabies.

This is an extremely important bill. It's been cleaned up. It allows your canine officer to pick up a cat which they cannot do right now through the state statute. And it's a very important permission that we are now allowing our canine control officers to have, if your town wants it.

I think this is becoming a problem in our state. I think it's something that we can do now and avoid a tragedy later. And I encourage everyone to support the amendment and the underlying bill.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you for your remarks, Representative Gyle.

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Does anyone else care to remark? Representative Tercyak.

REPRESENTATIVE TERCYAK: (26th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, am in support of this amendment. But I also would -- I would want the Chamber to know that we too, in New Britain have some very important cats called the Rockcats and we ask your support for them as I will support this amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you, Representative Tercyak.

Does anyone else care to remark on the amendment?

Does anyone else care to remark on the amendment?

If not -- Representative Belden.

REPRESENTATIVE BELDEN: (113th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Please proceed.

REPRESENTATIVE BELDEN: (113th)

It's a pleasure seeing you up there at a chair. I hope that's an experience perhaps you might enjoy later in your life in other places.

SPEAKER NORTON:

I see.

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REPRESENTATIVE BELDEN: (113th)

Mr. Speaker, through you a question. In the amendment, lines 43 through 50, it talks about animal population control program and possibly a fund at some point in time.

Is this -- is there a fiscal note with this amendment, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the lady bringing out the amendment?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mushinsky, do you care to respond?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Yes, Mr. Speaker. Through you, the fiscal note says minimal fiscal impact. At this time it is anticipated that the amendment could minimally increase cost to the animal population control fund due to potential sterilization of feral cats.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Belden, you still have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE BELDEN: (113th)

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to Representative. Is this, in fact, language that establishes the animal population control account or is that already in existing statutes? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NORTON:

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Representative Mushinsky.

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Through you, Mr. Speaker. We passed that account in 1992.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Belden, you still have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE BELDEN: (113th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the lady for her responses.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you, Representative Belden.

Does anyone else care to remark? Representative Sawyer of the 55th.

REPRESENTATIVE SAWYER: (55th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the proponent of the amendment?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mushinsky, are you prepared to take a question? Representative Mushinsky, are you prepared to answer a question? Please proceed, Representative Sawyer.

REPRESENTATIVE SAWYER: (55th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the amendment as it affects the underlying bill, is there specific training for the animal

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officers in the handling of cats versus dogs?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mushinsky.

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Through you, Mr. Speaker. It is available, if they request from the Humane Society. This is an optional ordinance. The towns that feel they have a problem will decide to pass this ordinance and then they can go ahead.

Towns that don't feel they have a problem, will never use this. Towns that wish to control nuisance cats, can request help from the Humane Society; they've already offered to set up training.

REPRESENTATIVE SAWYER: (55th)

Through you, Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Please proceed, Representative Sawyer.

REPRESENTATIVE SAWYER: (55th)

Then the municipalities will not find an additional burden in the cost of the training of the officers?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no. This training will be offered free by the Humane Society and the entire ordinance is optional, to be chosen by the

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municipalities that believe they have a cat problem.

REPRESENTATIVE SAWYER: (55th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Sawyer, you still have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE SAWYER: (55th)

I'm finished. Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you, Representative Sawyer.

Does anyone else care to remark on the bill, on the amendment, House A? Does anyone else care to remark on House A?

If there is -- Representative Gelsi.

REPRESENTATIVE GELSI: (58th)

Mr. Speaker, question to the proponent, through you, sir.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Please proceed with your question. Representative Mushinsky, prepare yourself.

REPRESENTATIVE GELSI: (58th)

Is there anything in the state statutes presently that a community that wishes to do this can't do it by doing their own ordinances which are already part of the statutes?

SPEAKER NORTON:

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Representative Mushinsky?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no. The Department of Agriculture has been asked numerous times whether they can do this at the local level and they have advised the towns they cannot, unless the Legislature changes the statutes.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Gelsi, you still have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE GELSI: (58th)

One more question, sir.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Please proceed.

REPRESENTATIVE GELSI: (58th)

Does the Department or anyone else in this world know how and who's going to control a cat?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mushinsky?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, we are speaking strictly of public health or substantial property damage. If the animal is regularly damaging someone else's property, then the animal would have to be fenced in their yard or otherwise controlled, kept in the house, otherwise controlled by its owner.

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SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Gelsi?

REPRESENTATIVE GELSI: (58th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You know, here we go again. There's fines in this bill that the municipality can place on their citizens and you can bet your bottom dollar, the ones that do it are going to say to their constituents, your friends down in the Legislature said for us to do this and that's why we've done it.

You can control a cat as much as we can the raccoons, skunks and all the other animals that run around wild and I just don't believe it's workable.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NORTON:

It's a very good point, Representative Gelsi. I hope everyone was listening.

Does anyone else care to remark --

REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: (50th)

Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Davis of the --

REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: (50th)

Thank you. I just have to beg to differ with those last comments that were made by the distinguished

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Representative.

I mean, what we're doing in this piece of legislation is allowing municipalities, if they choose, and if they adopt it as a town, to be able to take certain actions as it relates to cats, which have become a significant health hazard with the growth of rabies in the State of Connecticut.

And so to characterize it as the Legislature saying to the towns that we're causing the problems, when it's the towns in the debate we had yesterday who are wanting to have some freedom and ability to make decisions, I think it's great to allow them to be able to make decisions and use their collective judgment to say what they think's appropriate for their town or not. And I think it's a good bill.

Thank you.

SPEAKER NORTON:

That was also a very good point.

Does anyone else care to remark? Does anyone else care to remark on House Amendment A?

Seeing no one seeking the Chair's recognition, we will vote.

All those in favor of adopting House Amendment A, please say "Aye".

ASSEMBLY:

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Aye.

SPEAKER NORTON:

All those opposed to its adoption, please say
"no".

ASSEMBLY:

No.

SPEAKER NORTON:

The ayes have it. House A is adopted.

Does anyone else care to remark on HB 5801 as amended? Representative Maddox?

REPRESENTATIVE MADDOX: (66th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I must add my accolades, too. It is a deep pleasure and honor to see you in that chair. We both came in together and I see you're moving on a little quicker than I am.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the proponent of this bill, if I may.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Please proceed. Representative Mushinsky, prepare yourself.

REPRESENTATIVE MADDOX: (66th)

Representative Mushinsky, when we had this bill in the Environment Committee, several of us expressed a concern on it. And I guess that concern can be best

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outlined in the OLR bill analysis.

The first line in the analysis says, this bill allows towns to adopt ordinances requiring keepers of feral cats to register with a town requiring all cats to be licensed or both. Later on, it then goes on to say on a definition of what is a feral cat, this bill defines a feral cat as a free roaming domestic cat, which is not owned.

It seems to me we have set up a paradox in this bill to say on one hand the feral cat is just a stray cat that walks around; and on the other hand, we're going to license owners of feral cats, but I don't understand how they can be owned.

So, through you, Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if Representative Mushinsky can help resolve this paradox?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mushinsky, do you care to respond?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, through you.

Yes, we did notice that OLR comment and we have corrected it with House A.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Maddox, you still have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE MADDOX: (66th)

Well, yes, through you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I

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apologize. Could the lady direct me where the correction is then? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mushinsky?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, there are several places it's corrected, but primarily in line 43 and 44, after "under the care of", we have added "its owner or". And in line 44, we have deleted "owner or" before "keeper".

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Maddox, you still have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE MADDOX: (66th)

Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would thank the lady. That will help to address some of the problems with the bill.

My concern still remains is that under existing health codes and I guess I do have one final question for Representative Mushinsky, through you, Mr. Speaker. Under existing health codes, is there anything that would prohibit a community, if there was believed to be rabid cats out there or a health concern of a pack of cats out behind the Bradlees in the dumpster, of sending the animal control officer out to capture these animals?

SPEAKER NORTON:

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Representative Mushinsky, do you care to respond?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Department of Agriculture believes that the current law provides the ACO's with only limited authority, limited to issuance of a quarantine order for cats already involved in human bites.

What this bill does is attempt to deal with prevention of a health risk before it happens and repeated property damage or public health complaints.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Maddox, you still have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE MADDOX: (66th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ladies and gentlemen, I appreciate that the attempts that Representative Mushinsky has made to clean up the bill. It is clearly a little bit better with the adoption of House A, than the original file copy.

However, my general concern still is such that we are putting in place a mechanism to register cats. It is not also the full local control option that Representative Davis would have us believe. It simply says that if you want to register cats, you have that option, yes, you can or no, you can't, but if you do,

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you must do it in this way. And that's not what I consider to be a pure local control option.

I'm one who personally believes under existing statutes, if there's a health concern out there, that the local municipalities have the authority to act. What it then becomes is a mechanism to license cats in this state.

And I think Representative Gelsi is correct. If you want to see our phones ring off the wall, wait until the public finds out that it is our votes, if there's a majority here, that allowed the licensure of cats. I think that there will be quite a public outrage.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you, Representative Maddox.

Does anyone else in the Chamber care to remark?

Representative Mordasky.

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk has an amendment, LCO 5849. Will the Clerk please call and I be allowed to summarize?

SPEAKER NORTON:

The Clerk does have amendment LCO 5849. The Clerk

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does not have in his possession LCO No. 5849.

Will the Chamber stand at ease for a moment?

(HOUSE AT EASE)

SPEAKER NORTON:

If the Chamber will return to order, the Clerk is now in possession of LCO No. 5849, House B, it shall be designated. Will the Clerk please call?

THE CLERK:

LCO No. 5849, designated House B, offered by Representative Mordasky.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mordasky, do you care to summarize?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what this amendment does is provide an exception to the dangerous animal statute for a breed of domestic cat called the Bengal cat. And I move its adoption.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you, Representative Mordasky.

Is there any other further comment -- is there any further comment?

If not, we will try your mind -- you moved

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adoption; will you comment further?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Bengal cat is a hybrid between any domestic cat and A) an Egyptian Meu, and that's M-E-U, not M-E-O-W. And B) an Oci Cat, which is a domestic cat, or C) an Asian leopard cat, which is a wild cat.

A Bengal cat with Asian leopard cat ancestry is only considered to be a domesticated cat when its leopard cat ancestor is at least three generations back from the cat in question.

The domesticated Bengal cat is a regular sized house cat that does not pose any more threat to the people than any other house cats. The Bengal cat is around 12 pounds. So it might be well-fed.

The Bengal cat is the same species as any other house cat. It has the same size claws and teeth as any other house cat. The main distinguishing features are tiger-like stripped fur and behavior that is not as aloof as other cats.

Bengal cats are a specialty breed and their ancestry is usually well documented by their owners. It is estimated that by the representative of the International Bengal Cat Society, there are about 1,000

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households in the state with Bengal cats.

Mr. Speaker, I move adoption of the amendment.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mordasky?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

I move adoption of the amendment.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you, Representative Mordasky.

Will anyone else remark on House B?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mushinsky.

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the amendment. The Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Agriculture both oppose this.

There has been a running dispute over whether these cats should be certified as domestic or not. It has not been resolved. We have not had a hearing on this and it's wrong to put this on the bill when the two Departments have very valid reasons for opposing the domestic -- listing as domestic at this time.

In the case of the Department of Agriculture, their reason is also rabies based. They do not know

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whether this animal could be shown to be rabies free or not in quarantine. And they have a very valid public health reason for opposing this listing as a domestic animal.

So for public health reasons, I would ask the members to oppose this amendment.

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mordasky, do you care to remark for the second time?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what Representative Mary Mushinsky says is true. They are not sure whether they can be inoculated for rabies. But even the state veterinarian admits that it's hard to distinguish between a Bengal cat and any other domestic cat.

If it's hard to identify a cat as a Bengal cat, the state will never even have the opportunity to get involved if a Bengal cat bit someone.

The amendment only allows -- the State Department of Agriculture is unsure that cat owner associations keep complete accurate records of the cat ancestry and the amendment only allows documentation from an

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international multi-cat breeding association.

This will eliminate the small organizations most likely to have incorrect information on cat ancestries. These organizations take their roles and the accuracy of their documentation very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I think the biggest scare about this cat is its name. When they say Bengal cat, they think of a great big ole tiger that's going to jump on ya from around the corner.

This cat only weighs 12 pounds, it's very docile and if you didn't know about it, you'd think it was some other domesticated cat. And it's not feral.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you, Representative Mordasky.

Does any other member of the Chamber wish to remark on House Amendment B?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mushinsky, please proceed.

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, referring to rabies, the U.S.D.A. does not consider rabies vaccines licensed for hybrid cats. Therefore, in the case of rabies exposures, Bengal

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cats, even though they might have been vaccinated, would not be considered successfully vaccinated.

We are being asked to take on an additional rabies risk, because some people choose to have this type of animal in their home. It's not right to the public health.

We should oppose this amendment until such time as the Department feels these animals can be successfully vaccinated.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mushinsky, having spoken for the second time.

Does anyone else care to remark? Representative Stratton, the distinguished Chair of the Legislature's Environment Committee, representing Canton and Avon. Would you care to remark, of the 17th?

REPRESENTATIVE STRATTON: (17th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad you know my part of the state as well as yours.

Mr. Speaker, this issue has been before the Environment Committee before and as Representative Mushinsky has said, has been defeated there.

And I think it's important that people understand the issue really is one of rabies. And whether it's Bengal cats or other animals that have been

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domesticated by individual owners, we're really dealing with something that is a very serious problem.

And I actually had that driven home to me the other night. I was at the emergency room with my mother in the hospital. And a family came in at 12:30 a.m. with three young children who had been exposed to rabies, not by one of these animals and I'm not pretending that, but by a rabid raccoon that had bitten their dog.

And I really bring that up solely because rabies is something that we cannot fool around with. And these parents knew that the chances of their children having been exposed were very, very small. But because of the fatality of inherent -- I mean, automatic fatality associated with rabies, they felt they couldn't take that chance.

And so we had an 18-month-old and a three-year-old and a nine-year-old having to undergo four very painful shots to their abdomen in order to protect them from that.

And I think that is the reason that the Department of Agriculture has so clearly made their position on this known. There are continuing studies done, being done on the shed, the virus shed studies and as those are completed, it may well be that we can come up with

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a vaccine that will make it possible to domesticate some of these animals.

But in the interim, I think that prudence would also dictate that we defeat this amendment.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Good comments, Representative Stratton.

Does anyone else care to remark on House B? Representative Mazzoccoli of the 27th, Newington.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCCOLI: (27th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A question to the proponent of the amendment.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Please prepare yourself for a question, Representative Mordasky. Please proceed, Representative Mazzoccoli.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCCOLI: (27th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Representative advise how many people may own these particular type of animals? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mordasky?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, according to the information I have, it is estimated by a representative

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of the International Bengal Cat Society that there are about 1,000 households in the state with Bengal cats.

SPEAKER NORTON:

You still have the floor, Representative Mazzoccoli.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCOLI: (27th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Have there ever been any incidents related to the transmission of rabies that are unusual to this particular, I'm not going to say species or genus of cat or whatever it is, that is not -- or unusual compared to other cats? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mordasky, would you care to respond?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, would he please repeat the question? I didn't quite catch it.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Certainly. Will the Chamber please come to order? Our interlocutors are having trouble understanding each other.

Representative Mazzoccoli, please reframe your question.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCOLI: (27th)

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Again, for you, Mr. Speaker, are -- is the proponent aware of any unusual events or circumstances or statistics related to the transmission of rabies through this particular cat, that is not so of the general population of cats that are considered legal to be held as pets here in the State of Connecticut?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mordasky?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I do not know of any incident. But I believe that these cats would be less exposed to rabies because they are a very valuable animal and they wouldn't be out straying outside the household. They are very well protected and if they did get out, it would be accident.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCOLI: (27th)

Again, through you, Mr. Speaker, would the Representative know, what is the value of one of these particular animals?

SPEAKER NORTON:

What is the value of one of these particular animals, Representative Mordasky?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the dollar value is, but I have an under -- I understand

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that it's quite high.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mazzoccoli, he doesn't know --

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCOLI: (27th)

And through you, Mr. Speaker, can these animals be bred with other cats of domestic variety?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Can these animals be bred -- oh, Representative Mordasky.

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I didn't have my ears on, so I didn't get that.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Can these animals be bred with other felines of a domestic nature?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that's how they came about.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mazzoccoli?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

They were bred -- it's a hybrid, a Bengal cat is a hybrid between any domestic cat and three other classes: an Egyptian Meu, and that's M-E-U --

SPEAKER NORTON:

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Representative Mordasky, would you hold the microphone closer to your mouth? Thank you, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Cord isn't long enough. Which is a domestic cat. And Oci cat, which is a domestic cat and an Asian leopard cat, which happens to be a wild cat.

And if it's crossed with an Asian leopard cat, it is not considered domesticated until three generations have gone by.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCOLI: (27th)

So, through you, Mr. Speaker, if one of these species of cats was to mate with another domestic variety, would we necessarily know it? In other words, these people may have these cats, they may have mated with another domestic variety and be out in the general population? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mordasky, do you care to respond?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, probably not. Probably not. The biggest bugaboo to this thing is its name. And if you didn't probably told the person that it was a Bengal cat and said it was some other type of cat, unless the person was an expert, they wouldn't know and

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just take it as another cat.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mazzoccoli, you still have the floor.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCOLI: (27th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So would that require genetic testing to determine? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mordasky?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, they have -- I guess it's like a registration with the International Bengal Cat Society. And they keep a very stringent record on these cats and their breeding, with a result that their lineage is well defined.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCOLI: (27th)

And through you, Mr. Speaker, does the proponent of the amendment know of anybody who owns these pets?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mordasky?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no, I don't.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mazzoccoli, you still have the

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floor.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCOLI: (27th)

I didn't hear the response, Mr. --

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mordasky, would you repeat your response?

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no, I don't know of anybody that has a Bengal cat. I'm doing this pro bono.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mazzocoli, do you care to ask further questions?

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCOLI: (27th)

Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of any more probing questions on this matter. But I thank you for the time.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: (50th)

Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Does anyone else care to remark on this bill, man-eating cats or something? Representative Davis.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: (50th)

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Mr. Speaker, I've been so enthralled by this, what did you call it, interlocution or something like that?

SPEAKER NORTON:

I screwed up, excuse me.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: (50th)

Okay. I've been so enthralled by this dialogue that it seems to me that this is an extremely important vote before us, so important that I'd ask that it be done by roll call, please.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Would anyone in this Chamber who wants a roll call vote, please say "aye".

ASSEMBLY:

Aye.

SPEAKER NORTON:

I'm afraid I don't believe that fully one-fifth of those present did that, Representative Davis. At this point a roll call will not be ordered.

Representative Davis, are you seeking the attention of the Chair?

Any further comments, Representative Dickman, on House B?

REPRESENTATIVE DICKMAN: (132nd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to a point of

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parliamentary inquiry.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Please proceed, Representative Dickman.

REPRESENTATIVE DICKMAN: (132nd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After the events of yesterday, I just wondered if this question is divisible?

SPEAKER NORTON:

I can see no clear delineation that would put this proposal into halves, thirds, quarters. So to respond, Representative Dickman, no, I don't believe so. But only upon such a motion will I give you a ruling.

REPRESENTATIVE DICKMAN: (132nd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(APPLAUSE)

SPEAKER NORTON:

Does anyone else care to remark on House B?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mushinsky, I believe for the third time.

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

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Perhaps not the third time in this amendment, Mr. Speaker.

On this amendment, I would ask my colleagues to vote no. You are being asked to vote yes on an animal that we do not have an accurate vaccine against rabies. You are asked to being vote yes to expose some of your constituents to risk so that some people who choose to have a fancy pet can have one.

That's not a good balance of the public interest. Until the vaccine is approved for the Bengal cat, I am asking all of my colleagues for a loud "no".

SPEAKER NORTON:

Are there any other further comments, Representative Mordasky, for the third time, I believe.

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Mr. Speaker, I ask permission for the third time.

SPEAKER NORTON:

You have -- does anyone object to Representative Mordasky speaking for the third time?

Hearing none, Representative Mordasky.

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think there's -- in fact, there's less danger of these cats spreading rabies than those feral cats running around the barnyards and the

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backyards and that can't be vaccinated and probably never will be vaccinated.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you very --

REPRESENTATIVE MORDASKY: (52nd)

And I want a loud "yes".

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you, Representative Mordasky.

Does any other member of the Chamber care to remark on House Amendment B? Representative Widlitz.

REPRESENTATIVE WIDLITZ: (98th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would respectfully request a roll call vote on this amendment.

SPEAKER NORTON:

I'm sorry, that request is out of order. A roll call was requested earlier and not fully a fifth of the Chamber went along with the idea.

REPRESENTATIVE WIDLITZ: (98th)

Okay.

SPEAKER NORTON:

And I don't believe I can entertain a second request.

REPRESENTATIVE WIDLITZ: (98th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you, Representative Widlitz.

Does anyone else care to comment or speak on House
Amendment B?

If not, the Chair is ready to try your minds. All
of those in favor of adopting House B, say "aye".

ASSEMBLY:

Aye.

SPEAKER NORTON:

All those opposed say, "no".

ASSEMBLY:

No.

SPEAKER NORTON:

The ayes have it. The amendment is adopted and
ruled technical.

Are there any other comments, speeches or probing
questions on HB 5801? Representative Mazzoccoli.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCOLI: (27th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Not to be outdone by the great Representative
Mordasky, the Clerk is in possession of LCO 1957. May
he call and I be allowed to summarize?

SPEAKER NORTON:

The Clerk is in possession of LCO 1957 -- the
Clerk is not in possession of LCO 1957. Will the

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Chamber please stand at ease?

(HOUSE AT EASE)

SPEAKER NORTON:

As a reminder, as business becomes more and more pressing in the last couple weeks of the session, would members offering amendments please have them well organized in advance?

Will the Chamber return to order?

Will the Clerk please call LCO No. 1957, which shall be designated House Amendment C?

THE CLERK:

LCO No. 1957, House C, offered by Representative
Mazzoccoli.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mazzoccoli, will you remark?

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCCOLI: (27th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What this amendment would do --

SPEAKER NORTON:

I'm sorry, Representative Mazzoccoli, my apologies.

Had you asked for permission to summarize?

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCCOLI: (27th)

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Yes. Mr. Speaker, the Clerk is in possession of LCO 1957. I'd like to be allowed to summarize, please?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Please do.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCCOLI: (27th)

Mr. Speaker, this bill would change the classification of ferrets from exotic to domestic animals. I move adoption.

SPEAKER NORTON:

The question is on adoption. Will you remark further? Representative Mazzoccoli.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCCOLI: (27th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Similar to the last amendment, this would apply to ferrets. Currently under state law, ferrets are classified as exotic animals. The states of Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Hampshire and Vermont all classify the ferret as a domestic animal. The State of Connecticut is the only state, other than New York, who has now grappling with this issue that treats it as exotic.

I'm in possession of a copy of a letter from Governor Weld of Massachusetts, who just last month enacted into law the domestication of the ferret, where in Massachusetts the population of ferrets was

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approximately 20,000.

Now, I'm also in possession of a letter from the Department of Agriculture who is against the designation of domestication. And the reason for that is because of a similar reason on the last amendment regarding the spread of rabies in this animal.

So what we did, Mr. Speaker, was to specifically put in this amendment that the Commissioner may establish regulations in accordance with provisions of Chapter 54 of the General Statutes regarding the ownership of ferrets for the purpose of rabies control.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, this was put in to satisfy the Commissioner's concern regarding the potentially different nature of rabies control for ferrets, than there might be for dogs and cats.

However, there has not been a known case of rabies spread by a ferret through a bite. Since the way rabies is spread is through bites, what happens, Mr. Speaker, in the process is a -- from the time rabies is contracted to the time the rabies virus shows up in the saliva, it's called a shedding period.

According to the literature, the scientific literature with respect to ferrets, ferrets die before they shed. In other words, they die before the rabies virus shows up in the saliva.

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So, again, Mr. Speaker, this bill would domesticate the ferret, take it out of the realm of the exotic. And would specifically allow the Commissioner to set up any special regulations he deems appropriate for the control of rabies in this particular animal. In fact, better control than the amendment that was just passed by this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I move adoption.

SPEAKER NORTON:

The amendment has been moved, designated House C.

Does anyone else in the Chamber care to remark?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mushinsky?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Representative Mazzoccoli has made a valiant effort to correct the problem. But this amendment does not do it.

The amendment in line 22 specifies regulations regarding the sale or ownership of ferrets for the purpose of rabies control. That's not what we need. We need to have regulations regarding the exposure to and quarantine of ferrets for rabies control.

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The specific scientific problem which has never been addressed is that, to date, there has not an established quarantine period for ferrets that are involved in biting humans.

So the human, and this could be your child, would have to needlessly undergo rabies post exposure prophylaxis shots, painful shots, because we do not yet know if the ferret in captivity has shed the rabies.

We are making people in the community undergo painful shots because we do not yet know the quarantine period for rabies and ferrets.

This amendment does not do the job. I would ask - the Department still opposes the amendment. I would ask my colleagues to vote no and Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure it's you with the shades, but Mr. Speaker if it's you, I'd ask that when the vote is taken, it be taken by roll.

SPEAKER NORTON:

The motion has been made that this be taken by roll. Would all those in favor of taking this vote by roll, please shout "aye".

ASSEMBLY:

Aye.

SPEAKER NORTON:

I'm afraid I wouldn't call that one-fifth of those

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present. There will not be a roll call vote.

Does anyone else care to remark on the amendment?

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCOLI: (27th)

Mr. Speaker, for the second time, please?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Mazzoccoli.

REPRESENTATIVE MAZZOCOLI: (27th)

Contrary, I believe, to what was just stated, this specifically provides broad latitude to the Commissioner to set up whatever regulations he requires to control rabies and that includes euthanizing a rabid ferret or one that may be rabid, if necessary.

We're not changing anything here, in fact we're giving him broad, very broad latitude by not specifying how he shall or shall not regulate the control of rabies.

And, again, this was done this way specifically to give him the kind of control he may think he needs as he's been saying.

But again, to the Assembly, all our surrounding states have domesticated this animal. The great State of Connecticut is many times right, but I think sometimes it's wrong. And in this state we have not just a thousand as in the previous animal, thousands of people own these varieties of animals.

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And again, we are giving the Commissioner specific latitude to do whatever he deems is needed to control rabies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you, Representative Mazzoccoli.

Does anyone else care to remark on --

REPRESENTATIVE STRATTON: (17th)

Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER NORTON:

-- House C? Representative Stratton.

REPRESENTATIVE STRATTON: (17th)

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, rise in opposition to this amendment, despite the fact that it allows the Commissioner to develop regulations. Until those regulations might be developed and adopted by the regulation review committee, there would be absolutely no protection whatsoever with regard to exposure to ferrets.

I think it is interesting that despite the fact that Governor Weld may have legalized this or classified these as domestic animals in the State of Massachusetts, Governor Rowland's Commissioner has urged us very strongly not to take this action in the interest of protecting our citizens.

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And I would urge defeat of the amendment.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Would anyone else care to remark on House C?

Seeing no one seeking recognition, we will vote.

All of those in favor of House C, please say

"aye".

ASSEMBLY:

Aye.

SPEAKER NORTON:

All those opposed, please say "no".

ASSEMBLY:

No.

SPEAKER NORTON:

The amendment fails.

Does anyone else care to remark on House Bill

5801?

REPRESENTATIVE COCCO: (127th)

Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER NORTON:

Representative Cocco?

REPRESENTATIVE COCCO: (127th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the underlying bill for several reasons that I'd like to share with the Chamber.

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One is that we're asking of our constituents something that is totally impossible and that is to control the cat population in the state.

I own a cat and I will tell you that my cat visited me for three years before she decided that she wanted to move in. I didn't make the decision; the cat made the decision.

We're saying to people, you have to control an animal; you may have to put a collar on that animal with a license on it. I will tell you that one of the veterinarians that writes for a local newspaper had an article at one time that said if he ever saw a collar on a cat, he would immediately cut it off, because it is so dangerous for cats to be outside with collars on.

We have to think about all of those things before we proceed.

There's another little story I'd like to share with you. We do have in our neighborhood a cat who does have litters occasionally. She is not owned by anyone in the neighborhood and it has been impossible for anyone to capture her in order to have her spayed.

However, when she has her litters, there is a neighbor who takes care of those kittens, who takes the kittens, finds them proper homes and makes sure that they are spayed.

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Now, this person and her generosity would be put in jeopardy by this bill, because she would be responsible for that mother cat who she cannot control.

Please think very carefully about what we do if we pass this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you, Representative Cocco.

Does anyone else care to remark on the bill --

REPRESENTATIVE WARD: (86th)

Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER NORTON:

-- as amended? Representative Ward.

REPRESENTATIVE WARD: (86th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's a pleasure to see you there. No doubt someday you would be in that position; perhaps you'll be in that position in our nation's capitol some day.

Mr. Speaker, more relevantly, Mr. Speaker, as to the bill before us, I've heard it characterized as enabling legislation. In the strictest sense of that word, that would be an accurate characterization.

It's not really what I view as enabling municipalities, however, to deal with issues as they wish. When I look at the JF report and the testimony of the Commissioner of Agriculture, they thought it was

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very important if you enable the towns to do something with regard to cats, they all had to do it the same way.

Well, that's not in the spirit of enabling legislation; that's not in the spirit of home rule; that's not in the spirit of allowing local governments to deal with the problems before them. That's in the big brother knows best; if you want to deal with a problem, do it our way or don't do it.

So I don't view this as enabling. I don't view it as something that tells our towns they can deal with health and safety and welfare of their communities, which I think they're empowered to do now. Instead says, here's one solution, take it or leave it.

I don't think we should be sending this back to our towns. This will be the only way they can then deal with these cat populations. It would say you can either do nothing or you can register them, order them sterilized and try to control them in that manner.

I think it is overly restrictive on our municipalities, will not solve the problems those who are -- with good intentions have introduced the bill and will probably be unworkable in this complicated form and I, therefore, urge rejection of the bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you, Representative Ward.

Does any other member care to comment on the bill as amended by House A and B, is that right?

Representative Mushinsky?

REPRESENTATIVE MUSHINSKY: (85th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have to clarify the remarks of the three previous speakers. Representative Ward, Maddox and Cocco both referred -- all three referred to the file copy, not the bill as amended.

The bill as amended does not include licensing, does not include registration, does not set any standards for how cats are controlled, because all that section has been deleted from the bill.

There is no concern here about collars, licenses or registration. It is simply a way to control feral cat colonies. If someone chooses to maintain the cat colony for a long period of time, they would have to be registered with their town, if the town so wishes. And the town would set requirements for how they maintain the feral cat colony.

And the other thing the bill does is if the town so wishes, the town may pick up cats who are causing public health problems or substantial property damage.

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They would be put in the pound and the notification to the owner is done just as we do now with dogs. It's the same exact process.

So the comments of the three previous speakers are not correct to the bill as amended. The bill gives towns two tools to use and remember that since rabies first entered Connecticut in 1991, there have been 49 cats diagnosed as rabid. They're the most common domestic carrier of rabies. And 114 persons were evaluated for exposure to rabies and many of them had to go through the painful shots that are required.

There is a public health risk. Some towns have asked for help. This is the bill that will help the towns.

SPEAKER NORTON:

Thank you, Representative Mushinsky.

Does anyone else care to comment on HB 5801?

Seeing no one seeking recognition, will the Clerk please open up the machine and allow members to vote?

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber.

The House is voting by roll call. Members to the Chamber, please.

SPEAKER NORTON:

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Have all members voted and is your vote cast correctly? Have all members voted? Have all members voted and is your vote properly recorded?

The machine will be locked. The Clerk will take a tally. Will the Clerk please announce the tally?

THE CLERK:

HB 5801, as amended by House A and B.

Total number voting, 146.

Necessary for passage, 74.

Those voting "yea", 93.

Those voting "nay", 53.

Absent, not voting, 4.

SPEAKER NORTON:

The bill as amended is passed.

(APPLAUSE)

SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Norton, I was very proud that you were there for that stimulating debate and I'm sure everybody's talking about when you get the transcripts, that will probably be one of the more interesting debates that we've had this session. So we're very happy you were here and wish you good luck in your future endeavors, sir, seriously.

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Senate "A" in concurrence with the Senate.

Total Number Voting	143
Necessary for Passage	72
Those voting Yea	141
Those voting Nay	2
Those absent and not voting	7

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Bill passes. Clerk please call 269.

CLERK:

On page 34, Calendar 269, Substitute for House
Bill Number 5801. AN ACT CONCERNING FERAL CATS AND
BENGAL CATS. As amended by House amendment schedules
"A", "B" and Senate amendment "A." Favorable report of
the committee on Planning and Development.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Will the day care center please come to order.
It's amazing how everyone loses their sense of humor
when they get this job. The lovely Representative
Stratton from the beautiful Farmington Valley.

REP. STRATTON: (17TH)

Thank you Mr. Speaker. It is certainly
appropriate that you are in the Chair on this.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

I'll assume I'm not being called a feral cat.

REP. STRATTON: (17TH)

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Somehow I think my days are numbered anyway. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the Senate.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

On acceptance and Passage, will you remark madam?

REP. STRATTON: (17TH)

Mr. Speaker, the Senate in its wisdom rejected House "B" and I would move that this Chamber concur with the Senate and reject House "B."

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

On the rejection of "B." I think we're going to call House "B" Clerk please call LCO 5849, House "B."

CLERK:

LCO 5849, House "B" offered by Representative Mordasky.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Representative Mordasky.

REP. MORDASKY: (52ND)

I would ask my colleagues to vote no on rejection of Senate "B", I mean House "B" and let's send it back up.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Will you remark further on House "B"?

Representative Mazzoccoli.

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REP. MAZZOCOLI: (27TH)

Mr. Speaker I have to agree with Representative Mordasky. I think we've discussed this at length. He made some good points with respect to this particular breed of cat. And I think the state vet is being a little bit too strict and arbitrary in his interpretation on how we should be handling these cats and I would wholeheartedly support Representative Mordasky's motion.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MUSHINSKY: (85TH)

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I rise to urge rejection of House "B" in concurrence with the Senate action. Now at the time this amendment came up before it was a bonsai amendment and I had no materials at my desk not knowing it was coming. But now I do. I have a letter from the Department of Agriculture, they are confirming that they do not consider currently licensed rabies vaccines to be approved for Bengal cats.

And therefore they may be vaccinated for rabies but there are no studies to show that the vaccine protects the cats from rabies. So for regulatory purposes they will not be considered vaccinated in rabies exposure incidents.

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Now if the House decides despite this letter to keep House "B" then perhaps the Conference Committee can do some work and clean this cat up.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Representative Mordasky.

REP. MORDASKY: (52ND)

Mr. Speaker, these cats according to the Department of Agriculture will not be vaccinated. They will be vaccinated but they really don't know whether the vaccine took or not. Actually these cats are worth \$2000.00 a piece I understand. And certainly anybody who pays \$2000.00 for a cat isn't going to let it be exposed to rabies.

I'm sure that feral cats are exposed, are much more chance of being exposed to rabies than a Bengal cat has. Mr. Speaker, even if this cat is vaccinated for rabies and it bites someone, the worst they could do for the person who is bitten is start the rabies shot or the vaccination against rabies to the human being.

I don't see any danger in this and I urge rejection, I urge, just say no to the rejection.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Will the chamber will, if I may frame the question again for the Chamber it's a bit complicated. A green

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vote, an aye vote is to reject House "B" to retain House "B" is a red vote. A Nay vote is to retain House "B". Representative Keeley.

REP. KEELEY: (125th)

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I join with Representative Mordasky in rejecting this amendment because I feel this bill has nine lives.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Sir.

REP. VELTRI: (9TH)

I also go along with most of the chamber except the statement made by Representative Mordasky that if one of these cats are bitten all someone has to do is be given the rabies treatment. I speak from someone who explained to me very clearly that is not a pleasant treatment. It is expensive and long time consuming.

To say just a person has to under go the treatment to save the owner of the cat just doesn't fly with me. Thank you.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Reject is aye. Maintain House "B" is nay. All those in favor of the rejection of "B" signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

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SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Those opposed to the rejection of "B" signify by saying nay.

REPRESENTATIVES:

No.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

House "B" lives another life. Will you remark further on the bill as amended? If not, staff and guests to the well of the House. Sir did you want the floor? Representative Garcia on the bill.

REP. GARCIA: (4th)

Mr. Speaker I rise in support of this bill send this cat on a hot tin roof up to the Senate.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Is there a metaphor remaining? If not, staff and guests. Yes, Senate "A" has not been dealt with, is that the question? I've just been informed.

Representative Stratton we have to do something with Senate "A" you brought out the bill, Senate "A" is languishing.

REP. STRATTON: (17TH)

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I move adoption of Senate "A" in concurrence with the Senate.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

On the adoption of "A" will you remark?

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Saturday, May 4, 1996

Representative Prelli.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Mr. Speaker, Parliamentary inquiry, has the Clerk called Senate "A" yet?

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

No.

REP. PRELLI: (63RD)

Then I don't think we can move adoption.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

We'll debate it in a minute then. Clerk please call LCO 6120, Senate "A."

CLERK:

LCO 6120, Senate "A" offered by Senator Daily.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Representative Stratton a brief summarization please.

REP. STRATTON: (17TH)

Yes. Thank you Mr. Speaker. I apologize to the other side it was my understanding that this went directly to conference upon the other and I didn't realize we'd do this now. But Senate "A" deals with the animals that are abandoned at veterinarian hospitals and would allow a shorter period of time for an animal that is there to be kept by the veterinarian before he could transfer that and eliminates the

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requirement for newspaper notice.

It still requires the mailed notice to the last residence. But it would shorten the time frame that, that veterinarian was required to keep the animal without pay. Through you. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Representative Prelli I thank, the Chamber thanks you for your vigilance. Will you remark on Senate "A"? Will you remark? If not all members to the well of the House, members please be seated, nope. Try your minds. All in favor of "A" signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Opposed nay. Ayes have it, ruled technical. Will you remark further as amended. Representative Keeley good afternoon sir.

REP. KEELEY: (125TH)

Mr. Speaker now that this bill has been worked on diligently and corrected I think this bill is purrrrrfect.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Does someone want to up the anti? Thank you very much sir. Staff and guests to the well of the house members please be seated, the machine is open.

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CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll
call, members to the Chamber. The House is voting by
roll call, members to the Chamber please.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Have all the members voted? Please check the roll
call machine and make sure your vote has been properly
cast, if it has the machine will be locked. Clerk
please take a tally. Clerk please announce the tally.

CLERK:

House Bill Number 5801 as amended by House "A" and
"B" and Senate amendment schedule "A."

Total Number Voting	146
Necessary for Passage	74
Those voting Yea	94
Those voting Nay	52
Those absent and not voting	4

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Bill as amended passes. At this time we will do
Points of Personal Privilege and announcements. The
Majority Leader Representative Lyons out there? Any
Points of Personal Privilege? Representative Kirkley-
Bey.

REP. KIRKLEY-BEY: (5TH)

Thank you Mr. Speaker. For an announcement and

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SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Hearing no objection, this bill is PT'd. Will the Chamber please come to order? Representative Ward for what reason do you rise.

REP. WARD: (86th)

A noble intent sir. If I may before we proceed to the next matter on the Clerk's desk, I'd like to announce for Calendar 269, which was House "B" 5801, our feral cats bill there will be conference committee.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

And the conference committee will consist of Representative Mordasky, Representative Stratton, and Representative Nystrom. I am confident that you'll report back to us in quick order, yes in five minutes, as soon as possible. And with that we'll turn to the call of the Calendar 403.

CLERK:

On page twenty-nine, Calendar 403, substitute for SB519. AN ACT CONCERNING LOCAL TELEPHONE SERVICES. As amended by House amendment schedule "A." Favorable report of the Committee on Judiciary.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE PUDLIN:

Representative Fonfara.

REP. FONFARA: (6th)

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I move for acceptance of

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Those voting Yea	150
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

DEPUTY SPEAKER HARTLEY:

Resolution is adopted. Will the Clerk please call
Calendar 269.

CLERK:

On page 29, Calendar 269, substitute for House
Bill Number 5801. AN ACT CONCERNING FERAL CATS AND
BENGAL CATS. As amended by House amendment schedules
"A", "B" and Senate amendment schedule "A." Favorable
report of the committee on Planning and Development.

DEPUTY SPEAKER HARTLEY:

Representative John Mordasky of the 52nd district
you have the floor sir.

REP. MORDASKY: (52nd)

Thank you Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker I move
acceptance of the Committee on Conference report and
passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER HARTLEY:

The motion is acceptance of the Conference
Committee report, will you remark sir?

REP. MORDASKY: (52nd)

Thank you Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker the
Conference Committee adopted House "A" and House "B"

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and Senate "A" that was adopted in the Chambers. Added to the Conference Committee was House amendment schedule House "D" LCO 6311, House "E" LCO 3355 and House "F" LCO 6137. Madam Speaker I move passage of the Conference Committee's report.

DEPUTY SPEAKER HARTLEY:

Thank you sir, will you remark? Will you remark further? Representative DePino.

REP. DEPINO: (97th)

Thank you Madam Speaker. I rise also to support the Conference report. Madam Speaker as part of this bill--in one of the House amendments--will be an initiative that we have undertaken in bi-partisan nature to support attacks by vicious dogs in Connecticut.

Madam Speaker, this particular issue--the attacks by vicious dogs on innocent victims--has been something that we have all been sensitized to, affected by, but most importantly Madam Speaker this issue is one that has affected many innocent children. Particularly in my city and the city of others, Danbury and Hartford.

With the scheduled House amendments and the Conference report Madam Speaker the General Assembly will be taking a step today to protect the public safety of innocent victims in roaming dogs. I think

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it's an essential part of our responsibility as a legislature.

Madam Speaker, children are being harmed and this is our response as a legislature to their parents and to their relatives, that says if you own a dog in Connecticut and you train your dog to viciously attack someone, that dog is considered now--under this amendment and our statutes--a dangerous instrument.

And it is no different than if you had a gun or a knife in your hand. And you will now in Connecticut be prosecuted criminally for this offense. And Madam Speaker, if your dog is not on a lease in Connecticut and your dog has a propensity to be vicious as in the host of animal that are out there unleashed that are attacking these innocent victims, pit bulls, rotweilers, mixed breeds.

You as a owner have a responsibility now. Not only in civil court, but in criminal court. The criminal penalties are not as strong as I would have wanted. Because the scars on these innocent victims--especially these children--will last for years, physical and mental and emotional.

But it is an opportunity to say that we as a legislature care. That it is not a Democrat issue, it's not a Republican issue, it's an issue about how we

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treat irresponsibility in the public sector and we protect the rights of innocent victims. Madam Speaker, I want to personally thank Representative Mushinsky, Representative Chase, Representative Mordasky, Representative Radcliffe, Representative Lawlor, and the wisdom of the State Senate, to put this House amendment in Conference and give the people of the state of Connecticut an opportunity to let them know that their state legislature hears them and is working for them on the vital issues that affect them. Thank you Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER HARTLEY:

Thank you sir. Will you remark further on the Conference Committee report? If not, staff and guests to the well, the machine is open.

CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call, members to the Chamber. The House is voting by roll call, members to the Chamber please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER HARTLEY:

Have all the members voted? Please check the roll call machine to make sure your vote is properly recorded, if so the machine will be locked. Clerk please take a tally. Clerk please announce the tally.

CLERK:

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Conference Committee Report on House Bill Number

5801.

Total Number Voting	147
Necessary for Passage	74
Those Voting Yea	138
Those Voting Nay	9
Those absent and not voting	3

DEPUTY SPEAKER HARTLEY:

Conference Committee Report passed. Will the Clerk please return to the Call. Calendar 576.

CLERK:

On page 13, Calendar 576, substitute for Senate Bill Number 387. AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF A MOTOR VEHICLE LEARNER'S PERMIT AND ESTABLISHING A LIMITED MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENSE FOR DRIVERS 16 AND 17 YEARS OF AGE. As amended by Senate amendment schedule "B." Favorable report of the committee on Appropriations.

DEPUTY SPEAKER HARTLEY:

Representative Jackie Cocco chairman of the Transportation Committee you have the floor madam.

REP. COCCO: (127th)

Thank you Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the Senate.

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when we find a requirement, a request and we find it's warranted for lighting that is put on utility poles, we would ask for a cut off lighting and do a design on it to see if it would work.

SEN. COOK: I want to make clear, you have installed the cut off lighting by the Department of Transportation, is that correct?

DON MCCALL: We have some cut off lighting installed, right.

SEN. COOK: Okay. Any further questions? Thank you very much. Bruce Sherman from the Department of Agriculture.

BRUCE SHERMAN: Senator Cook, Representative Stratton, members of the Committee, good afternoon. My name is Bruce Sherman. I'm here on behalf of the Department of Agriculture to offer testimony on Raised HB5801, AN ACT CONCERNING FERAL CATS.

The Department of Agriculture supports the intent of Raised Committee HB5801, AN ACT CONCERNING FERAL CATS but has concerns regarding certain aspects of the bill. The Department of Agriculture has and continues to be concerned about the lack of laws and regulations that would provide the authority, either at the state or municipal level, to address the issue of roaming cats and the public health risks such as rabies and other zoonotic diseases inherent with such animals.

Raised Committee HB5801 takes a step in the appropriate direction by enabling municipalities to adopt ordinances to address the roaming cat issue. However, the following areas are of concern to the Department of Agriculture.

The Department is strongly opposed to the concept of owners or keepers of feral cats to be eligible for participation in the animal population control program. Such eligibility has the potential to quickly deplete the dedicated fund by which the program operates. The intent of the animal population control program is to provide low cost spaying, neutering and pre-surgical vaccination

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services for people who adopt dogs and cats from municipal pounds and provide those animals with a good home and a quality life.

Many feral cats will not make suitable pets and would be released back to their colonies with no standard guidelines for the quality of care or maintenance where average life expectancy may be as little as three years.

By allowing participation in the animal population control program, not only will program funds be quickly depleted, but in addition, the existence of feral cats usually in colonies, will be supported and oftentimes in situations in which they pose public health risks and exist in less than optimal circumstances.

Support of the existence of colonies of feral cats is contrary to national guidelines for rabies control described in the Compendium of Animal Rabies Control published and updated annually by the National Association of Public Health Veterinarians.

Another concern that the Department has is in regard to the definition of feral cat. Feral cat should be defined.

Lastly, municipal ordinances providing for the registration and licensure of cats will not be standardized from one municipality to another within the state. Some method of standardizing such ordinances would be optimal while leaving the adoption of ordinances to the discretion of the municipality. Thank you.

SEN. COOK: Are there any questions? Thank you very much, Bruce. Yes. Oh, I'm sorry, Dr. Sherman, there is a question.

REP. PRELLI: In your testimony you said that we should define the, or come up with a definition for feral cats.

BRUCE SHERMAN: That's correct.

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REP. PRELLI: Would the Department be willing to provide that definition to us, and if so, can you briefly explain what it would be?

BRUCE SHERMAN: The definition or definitions, when we speak about cats that aren't in a home setting, can be confusing. Many times people, when they refer to feral cats, have a concept of wild cats without qualifying whether or not this animal is owned. The animal could be just a free roaming owned cat, so I think the distinction should be made there.

In answer to your question, yes, we would help work out a definition of this.

SEN. COOK: Any further questions? Thank you very much, Dr. Sherman. Steve Papineau, the First Selectman of Sprague.

STEVE PAPINEAU: Senator Cook and members of the Committee, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you today. I am here to request that the SB631, water division permits be adopted by this State Legislature.

In 1955, in the Town of Sprague, the Baltic Mill Dam collapsed. When it collapsed, all the sediment from this dam ended up in the basin of the Shetucket River. Because of all this sediment in the river, there are flooding problems very often which creates a problem to the people of the Village of Sprague.

Without help in easing the regulations so that we can, as a municipality, go in and remove some of this debris, and sedimentation, we have this constant threat of a flood to our townspeople. Throughout this winter alone, the ice condition created, a fact that the water on top of the ice rose and we came within six inches of another flood this year.

Two years ago you may remember, the Town of Sprague was flooded, the whole lower village was flooded. In easing the regulations, you would permit the Town of Sprague, as well as other towns in the state to be able to go in and remove obstacles or

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brief. We've had many questions and answer and clarifications, and maybe we will with you, too, but let's keep the testimony as brief as possible. The first speaker is Julie Lewin.

JULIE LEWIN: Yes, Senator Cook and members of the Committee. I'm Julie Lewin of the Fund for Animals testifying in support of Raised HB5801, AN ACT CONCERNING FERAL CATS.

Just a few quick, a few small changes we do recommend in the bill but support it very strongly. First, of the definition of feral as in feral cats which has come up already in testimony. I would suggest homeless, homeless cats.

Second, provision for owners or keepers, what is the difference between an owner or a keeper of a cat. I suggest leaving it in every referenced owners or keepers rather than drawing a distinction between the two or simply shortening it to owners.

Third, allowing these cats to benefit from the animal population control program. I suggest a small fee be charged so that the program is not depleted, the fund is not depleted, so a small fee schedule be put into the bill.

And finally, there is an exemption here, under Section 2 that the current language reads, such ordinance as any municipal ordinance requiring licensure of cats. Such ordinance may require cats not kept indoors to be sterilized except any cat registered with the cat breeder's association.

It's my understanding that people with breeding cats do not let them outdoors for obvious reasons. Therefore, I think there's no need to draw a distinction in the bill which would seem to favor one class of cats and cat owners over another, when in fact there's probably no practical benefit to it, so I would eliminate that exemption. And that's all, and that's pretty brief.

SEN. DAILY: It certainly is. Thank you very much. Are there any questions?

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REP. MCGRATTAN: Julie, you seem to say that feral cats are the same as homeless cats?

JULIE LEWIN: Well, the word, the expression feral cats is used differently. When I say feral cats, I mean cats that were born in the wild and who don't even know, it might even be desirable to be touched by a human being, you know, never been socialized by humans.

Other people use the term feral cats to mean stray cats. So I think that we're trying to deal with stray cats whether they live in colonies, whether they're in twos, whether they're in threes, whether they're singly, they are all out there breeding. They are all out there potentially carrying zoonotic diseases so I'm not sure, I can't see a benefit of drawing a distinction among types of homeless cats in the bill or in a piece of legislation.

SEN. DAILY: Cory Mason, followed by Maureen Westbrook.

CORY MASON: Members of the Environment Committee. My name is Cory Mason and I'm the field director for the Connecticut Public Interest Research Group, or ConnPIRG. ConnPIRG is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that for over 20 years has been working on environmental and consumer issues and represents over 30,000 members across the state.

Today, I am here to support, on behalf of ConnPIRG, HB5725, oppose HB5752 and support SB679. In regard to supporting HB5725, AN ACT CONCERNING TAX CREDIT FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES, I'm sure as many of you already know, auto emissions are a huge precursor to ozone and Connecticut has some of the largest ozone problems in the country, particularly in the Fairfield County area and this would just be one of many things that Connecticut has done to address the ozone problem.

It's a very easy bill. The federal government and other states have already taken these steps that are already identical to it and what that will do then is increase the market for electric vehicles for every day consumers who don't want to have to

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BOB CROOK: But our concern is basically that it sets up parameters for suits and what we want to do is get out from under suits.

REP. STRATTON: Arnold Baer followed by Harry Shook.

ARNOLD BAER: Representative Stratton, members of the Environment Committee. My name is Arnold Baer. I'm the regional director for the Humane Society of the United States. I'm testifying on behalf of my organization and membership today. I thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I'm testifying in support of HB5801, AN ACT CONCERNING FERAL CATS. I think most of you have got my testimony and I will try to be brief and not cover points that other people have.

We're generally in support of the bill because the bill tries to, I think, deal with two problems. One is the problem of over population due to wild or feral, whatever you want to call it, homeless cat colonies.

The other thing, it's going to help with the rabies situation in Connecticut. Say you're mixing problems that are costing the towns and the state money in all kinds of ways. When you have over population you have greater cost for animal control, animal control officers and the rabies problem I think we're all aware of.

I've gone line by line and I'll just summarize. I think this bill specifies residential areas. I think it's important to include commercial areas. Many of these colonies are found near dumpsters, in the back of the local food store, or department store and other areas around the town. Many of them are inner-city areas that are more industrial or commercial than residential. So I think that should be added.

I also think the definition should incorporate a line that says, any refusal to allow an animal to be impounded will be deemed as ownership of the animal. Many times people that are feeding these animals will be feeding them and when somebody

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comes and says are you responsible for these animals, are you feeding them, they'll say, oh, no, they're not my cats. They're just some strays. I don't know who's feeding them. But if the animal control officer goes to remove the cat, all of a sudden they don't want them to take it. So I think that should be deemed as ownership. That was used in the definition last year in the bill.

And where this is important is, of course, we want to make sure these animals get sterilized and they get their rabies vaccinations, so somebody has to be responsible.

Back to that, I note in here on line 20, you have, I want to replace may with shall when it talks about sterilization and vaccination for rabies. From what I read here, this whole bill is a may. It's enabling legislation. But once a town buys into this, I think it's important that if that's the case, if they're going to have an ordinance, then let's get those cats sterilized and let's get them vaccinated for rabies or otherwise what's the point.

And I agree with Dr. Sherman that there should be some kind of standardization statewide. It's enabling legislation, so that doesn't lend to that, but I think perhaps the Department of Agriculture can write some regulations or use their status somehow and draw guidelines the town should use to make sure that these are fairly standard.

Regarding animal population control fund. I do think this is a concern, but I think, to use (indiscernible) there probably are creative ways we can maybe use the fund but also supplement it to insure that we don't endanger it.

Maybe establish a fee, a permit fee, if somebody's going to register in a town that they have a colony, then let's have a fee for that permit and then maybe a small amount for each cat that is sterilized.

Now, many of these organizations are already getting a very good break from veterinarians on the

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price of their sterilization because the vets are trying to help them out because there's a large quantity of animals. So even a small subsidy or a small amount from these people may help and maybe the animal population control fund could tailor a lesser fee just for these types of animals when they're working with that kind of vet so we don't bankrupt the fund. It is essential that this fund remain solvent.

If they're going to license them, I think they should require a license differential, just like we do for dogs. That is, animals that aren't sterilized when they're licensed, then they should pay more for that license. That's how we're in part, for the most part, supporting the current animal population control fund. So if we're going to license cats, let's get a differential in there. Maybe the \$6 that they have for this one, and have that go into the animal population control fund to help pay for these sterilizations.

I also think it's essential that there be a mandatory identification for these animals now. You'll hear probably today all kinds of reasons why you can't put collars on cats or why you can't put ear tags. I don't care what you use. I don't care if you tip the ear of the cats which many of these colonies do, they cut off a little bit of the ear so they'll know that it is a colony cat. But they have to be identified so that an animal control officer can tell from a distance that that's an inoculated animal and that that animal belongs to somebody.

Possibly, if they do tipping, we should use the microchip technology which you can't see from a distance, but if the ear's tipped then you could use the microchip to see when the rabies vaccination was given. And this will help a great deal in the rabies cases.

And finally, I think on the fines, the other things I think you can read and understand. On the fines, I think the fines should be progressive. If somebody has not been following this law, each time that same cat comes in, let's make it a progressive

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fine and increase it so that the people are a little more apt to get in line with the law.

As I said, this is a large problem. This whole folder contains statutes from around the country that try to deal with this problem. It's a controversial problem. You'll hear people saying you can't do this, you can't do that. But it's a problem. And we don't have an ideal situation. Not every one of these cats is going to have a home, so we have to deal with it. We have to find a way to deal with it and as I said, I think with a little creative work we can make this bill work and do something for both the cats and animals of Connecticut and for the rabies problem. Thank you.

REP. STRATTON: Thank you very much, Arnold. I'd sort of infer from that then, that if the Department of Agriculture or someone were to actually develop like a model ordinance, that then we could do away with a lot of the provisions that sort of say what might or might not be in it. Just say, if you adopt an ordinance. You have the choice to adopt. But if it is, it will be in accordance with the model provisions or whatever.

ARNOLD BAER: That would be an excellent way to do it. I'm not a proponent of enabling legislation. I think the state should bite the bullet (indiscernible) and I appreciate the irony and good humor from the Co-Chairs up there and our order here, but I really think the state should grapple with this.

It's a statewide problem. We're not that large a state and rabies is a problem in this state.

REP. STRATTON: Thank you. Are there other questions? If not, thank you, Arnold. Harry Shook followed by Norman Van Cor.

HARRY SHOOK: Good afternoon, Representative Stratton, Senator Cook. For the record, I'm Harry Shook, executive director of the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association and we are here to speak in favor of HB5801, AN ACT CONCERNING FERAL CATS.

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And I'm very happy to hear the previous speaker say that this is a statewide program and this is what we tried to do last year and it only got half way through the Legislature and if we could resurrect that legislation and pass it, I think it will eliminate a lot of our problems.

We have always been in favor of the control of cats, today, more than ever, because of the national average of rabies in cats over dogs is 30%. We're close to 1000% over. We've had five rabid dogs and 49 rabid cats.

And we wonder why a cat owner or keeper should be less responsible than their animal than a dog owner. This as previously mentioned as enabling legislation. I, too, would like to see the state grapple with the issue again but one thing we have to remember, that this is not a mandate to the cities and towns. It's enabling legislation.

We would like to see the word, or a definition of the word feral on line 18 before the word keeper. And the other objection we have is allowing such a cat owner or keeper to participate in the animal population control program when no fees have ever been paid. And I think the fee for the cat to be, participate in that program should be higher.

And I would suggest that on line 22 insert a period after the word cats and delete the words provided any and on line 23 begin the sentence with a capital S and insert the word not between shall and be.

Please take this problem of roaming and feral cats seriously. It is not going to go away. We get calls in our office and they are averaging three a week from condominium owners, property owners. There is no way to dispose of these cats. There's no legal way it can be done. The Connecticut Humane Society claims they don't have any more room. They are attempting to make it a no kill society and they can just adopt out so many animals at a time.

So anything that can be done, we would be very

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happy to work with the Department of Agriculture and this Committee in seeking a solution. If you will just take a quick peak at the drawing that I attached to my testimony today, it's a cute drawing, but it is based on fact and we're going to have a lot of cats around. Anybody have any questions? I'll be happy to answer them.

REP. STRATTON: Thank you very much, Dr. Shook. Are there questions?

HARRY SHOOK: Thank you.

REP. STRATTON: Norman Van Cor, followed by Janice Trolan.

NORMAN VAN COR: Senator Cook, Representative Stratton and member of the Environment Committee. My name is Norman Van Cor. I'm a registered lobbyist representing Yankee Gas. And this afternoon I'm a stand in for someone else to provide testimony to you in support of HB5726 and SB680.

We have provided brief written testimony and I'd like to spend my time directing my comments to SB680 in particular. This particular bill I'd like to maybe give you a little background on some of the work that has been done to promote infrastructure in the State of Connecticut for alternative fuel vehicles.

The DPUC undertook an experiment three or four years ago in allowing the three natural gas utilities to expend up to \$750,000 a year for three years to improve the infrastructure for alternative fuel vehicles in the state.

We had done quite a bit of work in that regard and we used some of that money to explore possibilities of putting in refueling stations, particularly along the interstate highways. We're not in the business of retail pump sales. We do not want to operate pumping stations around Connecticut. We sell natural gas. We would prefer to bring natural gas onto the site and let private business, whether it be Shell or Mobil or an independent dealer or someone else in a private venture, deal with the

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by Larry Bingaman.

SEN. COOK: Is Irene here? If not, Larry Bingaman, followed by Bob Fink. Are you Irene? Come on up, please testify.

IRENE BUIJNUROWSKI: Good afternoon one and all and my name is Irene Buijnurowski. I live in Wallingford, Connecticut. I am representing HB5801, AN ACT CONCERNING FERAL CATS.

I'd like to make it clear to everyone that I do love cats. I don't hate them. I love them. I love the animals. Well, my complaint is, could I read you my complaint here? If I find it here. Am I allowed to use my neighbor's name? Okay.

To whom it may concern: We are all neighbors to Mrs. Lillian Pierce of 40 Valley Street. She is the owner of 7 large cats and now feeds another stray cat which now makes a total of 8 cats. These cats do not stay in their own property when they are let outdoors and this is the problem.

These cats are a menace to our neighborhood. We find our property has become a public litter box for these cats. We have stepped on their mess and we do breathe the odor of these cats are very unhealthy situation.

I have new bifocals, you have to excuse me. I've got to see where I'm reading. There has been no attempt on Mrs. Pierce's part to clean up after her cats. The back door is open on 40 Valley Street and these animals dump wherever they choose. These cats do not bury their feces. Most offensive is the terrible odor and the mess, a combination of these large green filthy flies which are nothing but big germ carriers.

No one should have to put up with this disgusting, sickening mess, odor or problem. Our cars are fairly new and have all muddy cat paw prints covering our cars. And these cats also do leave horrible scratches on our vehicles. This problem has been ongoing for a long time. Mrs. Shirley Giannotti who was our dog warden has retired, but

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before her retirement she had spoken to Mrs. Pierce saying that these cats are getting to be a nuisance in our neighborhood and she gave her an option. She said, I would like to put these little cages in my yard and if the cats get in there, she was going to take them down to the dog pound.

And Mrs. Pierce agreed to that and then she said could I come and visit the cats? She said yes, and then she said, well, when I visit can I come and take them home and Mrs. Giannotti said no, these cats are mine. Well, heavenly days, she was very upset about it which I don't blame her, because she does love all cats.

Now, our problem is, since Mrs. Giannotti spoke to her, she said I'll give you an option. Either the cats, keep them indoors, because if they're out, they will be my cats, not yours. Well, she kept them in November, December, January, February, March, April, May last year and Mrs. Giannotti retired on the last day of May. Well, June 1st came and wheee, we got the cats again.

We don't believe we have to live like this at the mercy of these cats. We are taxpaying, law abiding citizens of this town and we feel we should have the right to a clean and healthy environment. Why should a family be allowed to have so many cats in such a small area, especially when they are trained to use everyone else's property for their own private litter boxes.

We believe there should be an ordinance as to the amount of cats and the responsibility of the owners. If dog owners have to be responsible, why are cat owners exempted?

REP. STRATTON: Thank you. Thank you very much for coming up to give your testimony. Are there any questions? Thank you. Larry Bingaman, followed by Bob Finn.

IRENE BUIJNUROWSKI: Oh, I have pictures of my car the cat scratched.

REP. STRATTON: Okay, any information that you would

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like to leave with the Committee, if you want to come leave it with our clerk, it will be a part of our record. Okay? Thank you.

LARRY BINGAMAN: Good afternoon, Representative Stratton, Senator Cook and members of the Committee. I'm Larry Bingaman and I'm here representing Bridgeport Hydraulic Company to comment on Raised HB5724, AN ACT CONCERNING RATE TREATMENT OF WATER COMPANY LANDS.

I'd like to give you a little bit of background on the company and then make a couple of comments on the bill. Headquartered in Bridgeport, BHC provides water to a population of some 500,000 in 24 towns in Connecticut. The company owns about 22,000 acres of land, the majority of which are classified as Class 1 or Class 2 land and is used for water supply or source protection purposes.

About 2600 acres of this land is classified as Class 3 which is surplus off water shed land and is not required for public water supply or source protection. Currently, BHC is involved in the largest capital investment program in its history. From 1990 to 1997, we will have invested some \$200 million to build four federally mandated water filtration plants and make other water system improvements.

And while most of this capital investment has been financed through debt and equity offerings, the sale of BHC's surplus off water shed land has helped fund these projects. These land sales also provide other benefits to our customers in that they stem the rise and future increases in water service rates.

We've been involved in selling surplus lands since about 1989 and during that time we have sold some 700 acres of land, 82% of which has been sold as open space to land trusts, the state and towns. So I think our record shows that we are more than willing to work with land trusts and other environmental groups in terms of selling our land

So our experience shows, we believe that the

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REP. PRELLI: Just to follow up on that, maybe the answer might be just a notification to the town hall that this is going up for sale and that they would know who the (indiscernible)

REP. STRATTON: They already receive that, actually.

REP. PRELLI: So with that notification asking them to notify any land trust in the area. That might be a workable.

LARRY BINGAMAN: Yeah, there is a priority system that is set out in terms of who has to be notified. Water utilities are the first one that has to be notified when you're considering a land sale in case they want to use that for water supply purposes.

After that, the host municipality and then the State of Connecticut and then nonprofit land holding organizations are notified, or have the right of first refusal. So there is a priority system in terms of right of first refusal in processing our land sales. We obviously notify the towns and local water supply companies when we're going to go through a sale. So having it in town hall might be a logical place to have that notice.

REP. STRATTON: We'll contemplate that. But thank you. Any other questions? Thanks.

LARRY BINGAMAN: Thank you.

REP. STRATTON: Bob Finn, followed by Dick King.

BOB FINN: Good afternoon. My name is Bob Finn. I'm the town sanitarian for the Town of Plainville. I'm here to speak on favoritism of HB5801. I'm the guy that gets that letter and there's really nothing that can be done on the books now with cats and there is a great nuisance involved and there is a great need for their protection, rather than (indiscernible).

This bill as presented, I'm in favor of and the town is in favor of, but there is some changes that we feel should be made in it. First of all, the

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definition of feral totally should be struck from the bill. Feral is a wild animal or a domestic animal that has returned to the wild and it does not, it would not, we feel that this would not be held up in the legislation, the courts and stuff, it was something other than just a roaming cat.

The other areas that we would like to consider changed is, it only deals with residential. Plainville is a small town and virtually every other block is either commercial, industrial, or residential and it's very contiguous and it was only enforceable in residential areas. The cats and the dumpsters in the stores and such would not be taken care of.

We do favor the enabling legislation to allow the town to pass an ordinance that would best suit their own problems. A lot of times the state passes laws that are very general in nature and don't address the specific problems that many of the towns, specifically as their needs arise.

Perhaps in time, after the legislation is proposed, there could be some guidance from the Agriculture Department as I heard mentioned earlier today, that maybe would make it like the dog laws that are most acceptable state laws that would probably help and cover the issues that deal with cats and the dangers that they present.

What basically happens is that cats, their nature are not really domiciled like a dog. They don't love you like a dog. You may love them but the dog loves you. But cats don't. Their nature is much different. They roam outside whether, if you're truly a cat lover, you have a house cat, you never let it outside. You have it declawed and everything else and you really have to take care of your cat. We're not speaking of those cats. But most people that have cats have to let them out to relieve themselves or whatever else and some people actually promulgate cats by letting them just mate and indiscriminately become more and more cats.

The laws now say that when a cat reaches six months of age, she must have a rabies certificate.

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Whereas a dog has to have a tag around his neck to tell you he's got rabies shots. A lot of people that feed cats don't claim ownership as has been pointed out to you before. They feed them and then when the time comes for somebody to take care of them, they don't want to have anything to do with them because of the cost involved with veterinarians and rabies shots or just feeding them.

So we would like to see this Committee, if they would be so inclined to do something for the state, the towns and the cities that do with this problem of cats. Cats wander out. They like soft spots. They go to your neighbor's garden. They go to your neighbor's bushes. They relieve themselves and everything else.

I think a lot of the things have been said, I don't want to repeat myself about it. You get the idea. Hopefully you can help us out. We're the people that have to go out, the canine control officer, for example, the director of health or myself and believe me, the director of health doesn't go out on these, I do. And there's nothing really in the books, on the law, that really present and help the neighborhoods.

A lot of people are complaining and they really make a lot of noise, but we only can enforce laws that exist and I feel sorry for them in many cases. So thank you very much.

REP. STRATTON: And thank you for coming up. When we, I think talked about the idea of their being model, either ordinances or whatever, we've done that in a lot of other situations where a department of the state may develop something that's a model reg that towns then can copy and I hear your concern that maybe there are different situations in towns that you would want to allow them some latitude to address.

BOB FINN: Yes. Well, a model is good provided that the town for example, could insert their own needs into it. I'd like to see a model that's mandatory that you have to follow because it wouldn't deal with

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the specific areas. I would say, in a couple of years if you were able to get some cat legislation on the books, if you wanted to put it that way, maybe then it could be jelled into a more meaningful thing that would be acceptable to all the state.

REP. STRATTON: Thank you very much. Are there other questions? Dick King, followed by Elliot White.

RICHARD KING: Senator Cook, Representative Stratton, members of the Environment Committee, my name is Richard King. I'm the vice-president of administration of the Hartford Courant and president of the Connecticut Daily Newspaper Association known as CDNA. I'd like to speak in favor of Raised HB5752, AN ACT CONCERNING RECYCLED NEWSPRINT.

I have distributed copies of my written testimony, so I'd like to sort of talk around it rather than re-read this. DEP earlier said they did not think there was a need to change the law this year because they said, well, we're almost complying with 31% now anyway. I'd point out, based on their own records, we have not hit 30% yet.

Also, as part of my testimony I included a graph and I want to make sure the Committee understands what that graph is showing. In that the percent of recycled newsprint goes up, we are beginning to find a decrease in the quality and some of the smaller newspapers are beginning to find an increase in price, both of which are exempted under the present law, but of course that's almost like proving obscenity or what is profane what is not type of thing and we would rather not be put in the position of having to say well, the quality isn't there or the price isn't there.

And if we were in that position, that would in essence negate the law completely and I don't think that's the intent of anybody to sit there and say well the quality got so bad we don't have to use any at all and that would defeat it. So on the back of my testimony I have included a chart and hopefully on the back side of the written

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costs for the hour as a small newspaper, generally run 10% to 15% higher than virgin paper. What has me particularly concerned about the future increase of recycled content percentages is the fact that recent projections voiced by leaders of the newspaper industry, state that after a brief hiatus, prices of newsprint are again going to surge.

It is also unclear as to whether the newsprint industry can adequately supply the recycled percentages at a reasonable price. The proposed escalation in recycled fiber content for our industry will further endanger the small, independently owned newspaper's ability to survive in the marketplace.

One other consideration concerning The Hour and other daily newspapers in Fairfield County is the proximity to New York State in the attending proliferation of their print media that floods our market. It is difficult enough to compete on a level playing field, but when we're competing with the New York Times, New York Post, Daily News, on and on, that it come into the market, they have an unfair advantage over us.

I believe it is somewhat manageable for the hour and I assume other newspapers to achieve that 28%, 29% content for the next year and I'd like to propose that we leave it at that level for a period of time, two years, three years, until we can see some volatility in the market go out and also some stability on the pricing. Thank you very much. Do you have any questions?

REP. STRATTON: Thank you very much. I'm sorry you folks had to wait around quite so long, but we do appreciate your coming up and testifying.

B. J. FRAZIER: Thank you.

REP. STRATTON: Thank you. E. R. Mechler, followed by Tom Fitzpatrick.

ESTHER MECHLER: Hello, my name is Esther Mechler and thank you for letting me come today to testify

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about HB5801.

In New Hampshire there is a pet population control program which provides for the spaying and neutering of cats and dogs adopted by shelters. The New Hampshire bill also provides for spaying and neutering of cats and dogs for people on different forms of public assistance.

Last year about 1500 people used this service, thus insuring that thousands of unwanted cats and dogs were not sent to shelters to be killed, or not abandoned on the streets. In the last year in New Hampshire, since this law was in use, the euthanasia, the impoundments were down 38%.

Poor people cannot afford the often high prices for spaying and neutering surgeries for cats and dogs, often \$100 per cap for a spay. We are talking about feral cats which gather in colonies. We're talking about 10 or 20 cats, sometimes more, that's \$2,000 without the shots, sometimes.

So what happens is that these people's dogs and cats breed and the puppies and kittens are left out in the street to fend for themselves. This is the source of the feral cats that are of concern in this bill.

The number of ferals or unowned cats is growing in Connecticut rapidly. Why is that? Because nothing is being done to insure that the cats of poor people are spayed. Indeed, these cats can spread rabies. It is surprising to me that anyone concerned about the spread of rabies would ever oppose this bill.

As with the care of feral cat colonies, guidelines do exist. More and more around the United States, there are whole cities that are taking care of cat colonies. San Diego, a city of a million and a half, has an entire feral cat coalition with 50 veterinarians who cooperate to spay and neuter the cats to see that the numbers don't continue to grow astronomically.

As for these guidelines, I will give them to the

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Committee so you have them. Part of the care is spaying and neutering and rabies vaccination. It's all been documented. This problem will not go away if it is ignored as it has been. It will definitely get worse.

In Bridgeport, private citizens have been working hard to achieve a reduction in the number of feral cats. We have spayed or neutered 730 cats. This is done through private money. Caretakers, caregivers, make sure that the cats done, have food and shelter and care after this. However, I can tell you that we cannot indefinitely continue to do tag sales and bake sales to finance animal control. Animal control is birth control, at least when it's done humanely, that's how it's done.

I feel that the spirit of the pet population control fund, I understand it because it was born in my back yard. It was a task force of people from around the state who cared about this issue and that's where it was first discussed. The intention of it was to reduce the numbers of dogs and cats, surplus dogs and cats in this state.

The numbers of dogs reached is very good because animals adopted out of municipal pounds are mostly dogs. In Connecticut, cats aren't in municipal shelters. So, so far the intent with regard to dogs has been filled, but it's now time to control the numbers of homeless cats in this state. Control and reduce those numbers for their sake and for the sake of public health. Thank you. Do you have questions?

REP. STRATTON: Thank you very much Ms. Mechler. You're leaving those guidelines will be very beneficial so I appreciate that. Are there any other questions? Thank you. I do not see Tom Fitzpatrick around. Tom McCormick. Followed by Richard Straub.

TOM MCCORMICK: Good afternoon. I'm Tom McCormick. I live in West Hartford and I would like to preface my remarks that I am concerned that the cancer rates in our society caused by environmental (indiscernible) to a very large degree and I often see our federal government's environmental

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STATEMENT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
REGARDING
HOUSE BILL 5801
AN ACT CONCERNING FERAL CATS
BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
MARCH 15, 1996

The Department of Agriculture supports the intent of Raised Committee Bill 5801, An Act Concerning Feral Cats, but has concerns regarding certain aspects of the Bill.

The Department of Agriculture has and continues to be concerned about the lack of laws and regulations that would provide the authority either at the state or municipal level to address the issue of roaming cats and the public health risks such as rabies and other zoonotic diseases inherent with such animals. Raised Committee Bill 5801 takes a step in the appropriate direction by enabling municipalities to adopt ordinances to address the roaming cat issue. However, the following are areas of concern to the Department of Agriculture:

- The Department is strongly opposed to the concept of owners or keepers of feral cats to be eligible for participation in the Animal Population Control Program. Such eligibility has the potential to quickly deplete the dedicated fund by which the program operates. The intent of the Animal Population Control Program is to provide low cost spaying, neutering, and vaccination services for people who adopt dogs and cats from municipal pounds and provide those animals with a good home and a quality life. Many feral cats will not make suitable pets and would be released back to their colonies with no standard guidelines for the quality of care or maintenance where average life expectancy may be only three years. By allowing participation in the Animal Population Control Program, not only will Program funds be quickly depleted, but, in addition, the existence of feral cats, usually in colonies, will be supported and often times in situations in which they pose public health risks and exist in less than optimal circumstances. Support of the existence of colonies of feral cats is contrary to national guidelines for rabies control described in the "Compendium of Animal Rabies Control" published and updated annually by the National Association of Public Health Veterinarians.
- The term "feral cat" should be defined.

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Department of Agriculture

Testimony

Raised Committee Bill 5801

page 2

- Municipal ordinances providing for the registration and licensure of cats will not be standardized from one municipality to another within the state. Some method of standardizing such ordinances would be optimal while leaving the adoption of ordinances to the discretion of the municipality.

Thank you for your considerations.

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Bruce Sherman, Director

Bureau of Regulation and Inspection

Department of Agriculture

Tel. 566-5268/4268

001222

House Bill 5801

March 15, 1996

Dear Mrs. Mushinsky,

I am very pleased to hear that we do actually have a possible solution to our ever increasing health problems from cat owners due to no laws or ordinances in effect. Our local newspaper has on numerous occasions run letters from residents complaining of this problem. I know had we run an article in our local paper we would have had many more letters from the public.

My husband built a deck so our children could go into our swimming pool. The deck is four feet off the ground and we decided to fill in underneath our deck with sand for our grandchildren to have a rather large sand box. Our local cat owners open their house doors and the cats have been using our sandbox as their liter box. We have replaced the sand in this area several times. The neighbors think its a joke because "there is no law against cats roaming wherever they choose."

The local veterinarian informed us last year that when the cats use our sandbox, the feces from cats that roam the streets contain worms and a disease called toxoplasmosis. I spoke to the veterinarian this morning and they stated that we really should have had someone from their office go with this letter. They felt there is a definite need for this problem to be solved.

There should be a law controlling the amount of cats owned for the amount of square foot of a piece of property. Also, they should be tagged just as dogs are and also be neutered and show proof of shots.

We should be able to have some protection from these totally inconsiderate cat owners. There are very few stray cats that roam our neighborhood, they are usually owned by our neighbors.

Sincerely

Mrs. Diana Hotchkiss

Mrs. Diana Hotchkiss
38 Clifton Street
Wallingford, Ct 06492

To Whom It May Concern:

We are all neighbors to Mrs. Lillian Pierce of 40 Valley St. She is the owner of seven large cats and now feeds another stray cat, which now is a total of eight cats. These cats do not stay on their own property when they are let outdoors and this is the problem.

These cats are a menace to our neighborhood! We find our property has become a public litter box for these cats. We have stepped on their mess and we do believe the odor of these many cats is a very unhealthy situation. There has been no attempt on Mrs. pierce's part to clean up after her cats. The backdoor is opened at 40 Valley St. and these animals dump wherever they choose. These cats **do not** bury their B.M.'s. Most offensive is the terrible odor and the mass accumulation of those large filthy green flies, which are nothing more than big germ carriers. **No one** should have to put up with this disgusting sickening mess, odor or problem.

Our cars are fairly new and we have all muddy cat paw prints covering our cars and these cats also leave horrible scratches on our vehicles. This problem has been an ongoing problem for a long time now. Mrs. Shirley Gianotti spoke to Mrs. Pierce last year of this problem and we thought it had been solved. Since Mrs. Gianotti's retirement, the problem has surfaced again.

We don't believe we should have to live like this, at the mercy of these cats. We are tax paying, law abiding citizens of this town and feel we should have the right to a clean and healthy environment.

Why should a family be allowed to have so many cats in such a small area, especially when they are trained to use everyone else's property as their own private litter boxes. We believe there should be an ordinance as to the amount of cats and the responsibility of the owners. If dog owners have to be responsible why are cat owners exempt?

Irene Bujnarowski

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AN ACT CONCERNING FERAL CATS

HB 5801

State of Connecticut
General Assembly
Committee on the Environment

Testimony by:

Arnold F. Baer
Regional Director
New England Regional Office
The Humane Society of the United States

March 15, 1996

The Humane Society of the United States
New England Regional Office
Route 112, PO Box 619, Jacksonville, VT 05342-0619
(802) 368-2790 FAX (802) 368-2756

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Testimony by: Arnold F. Baer, Regional Director
In Support of: HB 5801 An Act Concerning Feral Cats
Presented to: State of Connecticut General Assembly Committee on the Environment
Date: March 15, 1996

One of the most pressing (and sometimes controversial) issues in the animal protection field today is that of homeless cat colonies. These colonies are not just a phenomenon of Connecticut, but are found in every state in the U.S., including Hawaii. It is an issue of quality of life for the animals, public health for humans, and survival for some forms of wildlife. And it is an issue with no simple, or proven, answer. There have been many approaches to dealing with it with various levels of success. But whatever, it is a problem, a problem for humane societies, animal control officers, health departments, municipalities, and individual citizens, a problem that must be dealt with.

My name is Arnold Baer, I am the Director of the New England Regional Office of The Humane Society of the United States and am representing over 20,000 members in Connecticut in support of HB 5801.

The intent and content of most of HB 5801 is sound and necessary. Rather than go over all the portions I agree with, I have listed below possible additions or modifications to existing wording that I think will enhance the bill and make it more effective.

Line 17 - Define "feral". The word feral has a number of definitions depending upon to whom you speak. However, to most it means a completely wild, unsocialized cat. In the case of cat colonies, this is not always the case - many cats are semi-tame having had owners at one time. For that reason, I would recommend the use of the term "colonized cats" or "roaming cats" or some such, to be defined as any cat residing in a colony.

Lines 17 and 18 - Include commercial areas: Many cat colonies are found near dumpsters behind commercial buildings or in other business areas. These, too, may present a nuisance or health hazard to a municipality.

Line 18 - Delete the word keeper: instead of keeper, use the word owner and define as in last year's cat bill "OWNER" MEANS ANY PERSON, PARTNERSHIP OR CORPORATION WHO OWNS, MAINTAINS, KEEPS, CARES FOR OR FEEDS AN ANIMAL, UNLESS SUCH PERSON PROVIDES EVIDENCE, SATISFACTORY TO THE COMMISSIONER, THAT SUCH ANIMAL IS OWNED BY ANOTHER PERSON PROVIDED ANY REFUSAL TO PERMIT ANY ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TO IMPOUND SUCH ANIMAL SHALL BE DEEMED EVIDENCE OF OWNERSHIP.

This definition includes keeping, and more importantly, inserts the provision that refusal to relinquish an animal to an animal control officer is deemed as evidence of ownership.

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In many cases this will identify these individuals who profess no ownership of an animal, but quickly balk when an officer wishes to impound it.

Line 20 - "Cat": Was it intended to place the term "feral" in front of the word cat? It would seem to be in keeping with the intent of this bill.

Line 20 - Replace "may" with "shall": Adopting the ordinance is already an option according to line 15, but if an ordinance is adopted, it is imperative that the animals be sterilized and vaccinated for rabies. Sterilization, of course, will help prevent the recurrence of the current situation of roaming cats, and rabies vaccination (which is already law for any owned cat) is essential for public health and safety.

Lines 23 to 26 - Establish fee for inclusion in the state's animal population control fund (APCF): The APCF is now supported by a "differential" in the price of the license for unsterilized dogs as well as a \$10 co-pay by program participants. It is only fair that "colonized cat" participants also pay a fair share. With that in mind I recommend the following:

- Establish a fee for a colony registration permit
- Establish a fee for each roaming cat sterilized under this law
- The amount of the above two fees should be enough to ensure that the cat colony owners are paying their fair share and that too great a burden is not being placed on the APCF. The APCF must remain solvent.

Lines 35 to 36 - Cat breeders: Remove the reference to cat breeders. If an owner, whether a breeder or not, chooses to let his or her animal roam, then the animal should be sterilized. It is these unsterilized "outdoor" cats that are causing the problem in the first place. Besides, anyone owning a valuable breeding cat would most likely not let it outdoors unattended.

Line 37 - License differential, change "may" to "shall": If a community chooses to license cats and charge for the license, there should be a higher price for unsterilized animals. Part of that differential should go into the APCF to help pay for sterilizations.

Line 43 - Identification, change "can be" to "is": The ordinance should require that all colony cats be actively identified by ear tipping, collar and tag, or other means that can be readily seen by an animal control officer. This is essential if the bill is to have effect. Also, it should strongly suggest the use of microchips for colony cats in order that ownership can be identified and dates of vaccinations tracked.

Line 63 - Change "sell" to "place" or "adopt": Although current language in the dog law, it is outmoded. Today's professional animal control officers **place** animals in responsible caring homes, they do not sell them as inanimate objects.

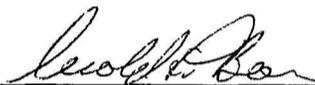
001227

Line 72 - Change "destroy" to "euthanize in accordance with law ": Again, it is more modern language, and also insures a humane death.

Line 81 - "Not to exceed fifteen dollars": Allow for an increase for second or subsequent offenses per individual animal. Obviously, this should further deter repeat offenders.

I feel that the inclusion of the above language will strengthen the current bill. Cat colonies are out there and need to receive more attention. Finding a way to equitably include them in the state's animal population control fund would be an excellent step. The end result will be fewer unwanted births - thus fewer unwanted cats - and a reduced rabies hazard. And of course that will mean greater public safety and reduced animal control costs for communities.

I urge your support of HB 5801.



Arnold F. Baer
March 15, 1996

HB 580001228

To Whom It May Concern

We are Mr & Mrs. James Stone and our back-yard meets with Irene Bujnarowski yard. Mrs Pierce's cats wander into our yard. Our small son plays out in his sand-box with his small toy dump-trucks. These cats drop their feces in the sand-box. They also lay down on our lawn and sleep there at times. Each summer our legs are bitten up with their fleas. My car is covered with cat prints and scratches. We do not have a garage and our car is white. Now we go to the car-wash more often at our expense. Why should any neighbor be allowed to own seven large cats living in such a small area? She should be responsible for the cats behavior

Jim Stone

001229

HB5801

To whom it may concern:

My name is Lynne Boynton and I reside on Duinnipiac St in WIFB. I've had nothing but problems for the last 7 years with the neighbors 4 cats. They're always tearing through my garbage and dragging it out all over the ground. Which I have to pick up everyday.

My car is always covered with paw prints and tiny scratches. I don't think that we should have to put up with the problems that these cats are causing and I also think that

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responsible for the damages
that these cats are causing.
Cats are disease carrying
animals & I think people
that want to own these
cats should keep them on
their own property so
they're not aggravating
every neighbor around them.
I don't let my dog rip
through their garbage or
walk all over their ~~cat~~^{cat}
or use their yard as
a bathroom.

Thank you,
Ryann Boynton

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March 15, 1996

To Members of the Environment Committee

RE: Raised Bill 5801 AAC Feral Cats

We have always been in favor of legislation to control cats. Today, more than ever, with rabies present in the State it is imperative that the cat population be controlled. The national average of rabies in cats is 30% higher than in dogs. In Connecticut we are almost 1000% higher with 5 dogs and 49 cats.

Why should a cat owner or keeper be less responsible for their animal than a dog owner?

This proposed legislation will provide cities, towns and property owners, troubled with feral or stray cat populations, a method of dealing with an ever increasing problem.

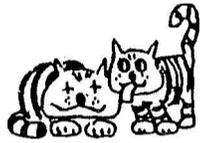
Perhaps we should insert the definition of "feral" on line 18 before the word "keeper".

The only objection we have is allowing such cat owner or keeper to participate in the animal population control program when no fees have been paid. If they legally adopt a cat from a pound and pay the required fee, then they would be eligible to participate.

Therefore, we urge that on line 22 you insert a period after "cats" and delete the words "provided any". On line 23 begin the sentence with a capital "S" and insert the word "not" between shall and be.

Please take this problem of roaming cats and feral colonies seriously, it is not going to go away.

The drawing on the attached page is based on fact!



TWO UNCONTROLLED BREEDING CATS ----
plus all their kittens and all their kitten's kittens
if none are ever neutered or spayed add up to:

