



CONNECTICUT BILL TO RESTRICT PET STORE DOGS

**** HEARING SET FOR MARCH 12th ****

The Issue:

A bill was introduced in the Connecticut Senate and then promptly set for hearing. This measure targets pet stores specifically and would potentially prohibit the sale of puppies or require pet stores to notify their customers that the dogs originated from “puppy mills.” **A hearing has been set for Friday, March 12th in the Joint Environment Committee (Room 2B of the Legislative office Building) at 10:30 a.m.**

The Impact:

Senate Bill 397 creates an open-ended authority for an “assessment of the adequacy” of existing law governing dogs imported in Connecticut and recommendations to expand the authority to enforce restrictions on the import and sale of puppies. It would mandate that the Commissioner of Agriculture submit a report that includes an assessment of the certificates of origin that are already required by section 22-354 of the general statutes to determine their effectiveness in:

- Limiting the number of dogs imported into Connecticut from so-called “puppy mills”
- Informing the purchaser of a dog from a pet shop that it may be a “puppy mill” dog

The bill also requires that the report include “any information the commissioner deems relevant concerning sources, other than puppy mills, of sick dogs imported into this state” and the report need not be limited to these things but may include anything further the Department of Agriculture deems pertinent. Finally, the bill provides that the report include “any recommendations to expand the enforcement authority available to the commissioner or any other department or agency of this state to minimize the importation of sick dogs into” the state.

Submission of the report would be required not later than January 1, 2011.

PIJAC Position:

SB 397 inappropriately focuses on pet store puppies, which constitute a small minority of the dogs sold in Connecticut. The bill completely ignores dogs brought in for adoption, which are a greater risk of disease. Any assessment of “sick dogs” should encompass all dogs, regardless of their source.



Recommended Action:

Senate Bill 397 has been set for hearing before the Connecticut Joint Committee on Environment. The hearing is scheduled for March 12, 2010 at 10:30 a.m. in Room 2B of the Legislative Office Building. It is critical that members of this committee be apprised of problems with this bill **before the** hearing. Contact all committee members by phone and email in advance of next Friday's (see committee contact information on the next page). Connecticut residents may also easily contact their own elected representatives through PIJAC's Legislative Action Center on its website at www.pijac.org/governmentaffairs. Make certain to also appear at the hearing to testify in opposition to this legislation. You may wish to include the following points:

- This bill unduly targets pet stores, which supply only about 7% of dogs in the state.
- Research proves that pet stores are a minor source of sick dogs.
- This bill ignores dogs imported into Connecticut by those adopting them out, which is a much larger source of sick dogs. Indeed, these come from not just outside the state, but outside the country. It is a violation of federal law for pet stores to sell puppies imported from outside the U.S., but shelters are free to do so!
- There is no way to identify a "puppy mill" dog because that term has no definition in law.

Contact PIJAC's Michael Maddox via email at michael@pijac.org or by phone at 202-452-1525 should you have questions about this bill or require additional information.

PIJAC Members! PIJAC Fans! Join US...

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) has been protecting and promoting responsible pet ownership for nearly forty years. Follow our successes, events, and action alerts through Facebook and/or Twitter at PIJAC4pets. If you are not already a Member, please join us today by visiting www.pijac.org/membership. For additional information on PIJAC and its many exciting campaigns, please visit: www.pijac.org and www.dontmesswithmypet.org. Or, contact us at 1-800-553-PETS (1-800-553-7387); members@pijac.org.

On behalf of pets, responsible pet owners, and the pet industry, we thank you!

**State of Connecticut
 Joint Committee on Environment
 Legislative Office Bldg., Room 3200
 Hartford, CT 06106
 860/240-0440**

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