



**PET INDUSTRY JOINT
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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TESTIMONY OF PET INDUSTRY JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL
**BEFORE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES
& ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
HOUSE BILL 3121**

February 18, 2009

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N. Marshall Meyers

Position: Qualified Opposition

As the world's largest pet trade association dealing with live animal issues, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) appreciates the opportunity to offer this esteemed committee our views on House Bill 3121. Representing the interests of all segments of the pet industry throughout the United States, PIJAC counts among its thousands of members various associations, organizations, corporations and individuals involved in the commercial pet trade. More specifically, we represent pet breeders, pet product manufacturers, distributors and retailers throughout South Carolina who could be significantly impacted by the legislation before you today.

Let me emphasize that nobody cares more about humane breeding, wild harvest, and rearing standards than does PIJAC. We have, for many years, provided highly respected animal care certification programs intended to ensure that employees are well trained in the care of the animals they handle; a program widely utilized not only by persons in the commercial pet trade but also shelters and humane societies throughout the country, and one that has even been adopted as a statutory standard.

PIJAC, for more than three decades, has worked closely with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and numerous state fish and game agencies in support of sustainable use standards involving wild harvest as well as minimizing the risk of non-native species becoming invasive species.

Our association has long been recognized as the voice for a responsible pet trade, and routinely advocates for new statutory standards that are in the best interests of companion animals and the pet-owing public. We also continually seek to advance the voluntary implementation of superior standards in the care, handling and transport of companion animals.

Our concern about the pending legislation is a need for clarification in three areas. While PIJAC is not taking a position on the catch limits imposed by the Bill, we believe that taxonomic clarification is warranted with respect to the Yellowbelly turtle (*Trachemys scripta*) since it should read *Trachemys scripta scripta* to avoid confusion with the Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*).

The second concern involves a ban against “removal from the state.” While in the context of the bill that indicates removal from the wild in the State some have confused its meaning to refer to “export from the State.” We recommend that the language be clarified by indicating that this means wild harvest not “export/remove” from the State.

The third concern involves prohibition of “sale, offer for sale, or purchase” of the Yellowbelly and Common snapping turtles, or for that matter, any other listed species from an out-of-state supplier. If the specimens have not been removed from the wild in South Carolina, why should they be otherwise prohibited? PIJAC urges the Committee to reconsider this approach and limit restrictions, if deemed appropriate, to removal from the wild in the State and not ban otherwise legal interstate commerce, irrespective if from an in-state permitted facility or an -out-of-state supplier.

If you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you greatly for your consideration of our concerns.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council

N Marshall Meyers

By: N. Marshall Meyers, Esq.