



P.O. Box 1012
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February 28, 2024

Testimony to the Environment Committee

Regarding HB 5217 AAC the Use of Certain Rodenticides, HB 5223 AAC Minor Revisions to Agriculture Related Statutes, and HB 5224 AAC the Protection of Spiny Dogfish

Dr. James Lombella, President / Executive Director

Co-Chairs Senator Lopes and Representative Gresko, Vice Chairs, Ranking members and honorable members of the Environment Committee, CT Votes for Animals (CVA) is a grass roots animal advocacy organization. CVA is committed to improving and protecting the lives of all Connecticut animals by advocating for legislative changes at the CT General Assembly and mobilizing our 8,000+ animal supporters in every legislative district across our state.

I submit testimony about three bills that impact Connecticut's animals on the agenda and request amendments to HB 5217 AAC the Use of Certain Rodenticides and HB 5223 AAC Minor Revisions to Agriculture Related Statutes and supporting HB 5224 AAC the Protection of Spiny Dogfish.

HB 5217 AAC the Use of Certain Rodenticides, we are pleased that the committee has heard the public's concerns about the use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) and for raising the proposed bill. **The proposed bill as drafted is lacking and must be amended** not only to stop the sale but also to ban the use of SGARs statewide.

Second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) are powerful poisons that stay in tissues and organs of rodents for months, poisoning predators that naturally consume these contaminated rodents as part of their food chain. Owls, eagles, fox, hawks and even family pets are consuming lethal doses of these toxins and dying a painful death. The latest test results coordinated through "A Place Called Hope, Inc." shows staggering statistics with 79 completed tests and 69 of those tests resulting positive for 1 or more ingredient of SGARs. This equates to 87% positive results confirming that SGARs are causing unintentional deaths to our wildlife here in Connecticut. The current use of SGARs is counterproductive to rodent control by poisoning, harming, and killing the natural predators that regulate rodent populations throughout Connecticut. We need stronger measures to protect wildlife, pets and even children from unintentional rodenticide poisoning. Alternatives to these poisons exist and should be used.

Unfortunately, the bill as drafted would allow licensed Pest Management Providers in Connecticut to continue to use SGARs, resulting in the continued deaths of predatory birds and other wildlife. It is the poisons themselves that are the problem and we need their use banned.

As stated in the Article called *PASS ON POISONS: Safe Rodent Management Solutions by Christine Cummings, Director, A Place Called Hope, Inc.*, "Fertility Control products lessen rodent fertility. It does not render them sterile but inhibits their reproductive ability, keeping populations more manageable to apply safe, non-toxic alternatives. These products don't utilize hormones and have no

bioaccumulation, biomagnification, and no secondary effect on predatory wildlife. Since it must be continuously applied to remain effective, it is a great alternative for Pest Management Professionals to replace poisons to continue their service-based business with clients. It's a win/win for all, especially our wildlife". I urge the committee to amend the language of this proposed bill and ban the use of SGARs in Connecticut.

Regarding **HB 5223 AAC Minor Revisions to Agriculture Related Statutes, Section 1** of this bill is **harmful to Connecticut's animals and must be removed from the bill.**

Section 1 of this bill redefines "animal" for the purposes of Sections 328-367a of the statutes by limiting the protections of the chapter to only animals that "humans selectively breed in captivity" and that live "in close association with humans". It further narrows the definition of animal for amphibians, fish, and reptiles to only those "that are offered for sale by a pet shop for which there is certification of captive breeding".

The protections provided to animals under this chapter of the statutes include the ability of Animal Control Officers (ACOs) to intervene to prevent cruelty (Section 22-329) and to seize or seek forfeiture of animals when they have reasonable cause to believe that cruelty is occurring (Section 329a). Not only would feral and community cats and other animals now be unprotected from cruelty under this bill as written, but it is important to understand that people keep animals as pets that are obtained from sources other than pet shops or places where they are selectively bred in captivity by humans. Under this definition, many pets would be excluded from protection as would thousands of animals across the state!

In addition to the problems with the definition in this section, redefining animal" in the bill can lead to confusion as to "animal" in other statutory sections. It can only serve to impede services to those (animals) the statutes were meant to protect. Please strike Section 1 of this bill.

Lastly, regarding **HB 5224 AAC the Protection of Spiny Dogfish**, we **support** the bill which prohibits the possession, sale, trade, or distribution of shark fins. Shark finning is the cruel and shameful act of removing fins from sharks and discarding the rest of the shark back into the ocean. Please act favorably on HB 5224.

To summarize, we oppose, as written, HB 5223 and support with needed amendment HB 5217 and support HB 5224.

I want to thank the committee for their time and serious consideration on the above proposed bills.



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Regarding HB 5217 AAC the Use of Certain Rodenticides, HB 5223 AAC Minor Revisions to Agriculture Related Statutes, and HB 5224 AAC the Protection of Spiny Dogfish

Susan Linker, Board Member

Senator Lopes, Representative Gresko, vice chairs, ranking members, and honorable members of the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding three bills on behalf of CT Votes for Animals. We are a grass-roots advocacy organization dedicated to improving the lives of Connecticut's animals, with 8,000 supporters across the state.

I am here today to talk to you about three bills that impact Connecticut's animals on your agenda and will be raising significant concerns and requesting amendments to HB 5217 AAC the Use of Certain Rodenticides and HB 5223 AAC Minor Revisions to Agriculture Related Statutes and supporting HB 5224 AAC the Protection of Spiny Dogfish.

First, regarding **HB 5217 AAC the Use of Certain Rodenticides**, we are grateful to the committee for hearing the public's concerns about the use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) and for raising a bill to address this issue, but **the bill as drafted is deficient and must be amended** to ban the use and sale of SGARs statewide.

Second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides are powerful poisons that stay in tissues and organs of rodents for months, making it easy for predators that naturally eat rodents – such as owls, eagles, and hawks -- to get a lethal dose of toxins. In this way, the use of SGARs is counterproductive to rodent control by poisoning, harming, and killing the very animals that naturally regulate rodent populations throughout Connecticut. Tragically, unintentional secondary poisonings from SGARs are increasing at an alarming rate and victims include wildlife and companion animals. Alternatives to these poisons exist and should be used.

Unfortunately, the bill as drafted would allow the 322 licensed Pest Management Providers in Connecticut to continue to use SGARs, resulting in escalating deaths of predatory birds, other wildlife. Please understand that it is not who applies the poisons, but the poisons themselves that are the problem.

You may be aware that two beautiful Callimico monkeys at the Beardsley Zoo died this summer from rodenticide toxicosis after eating a mouse poisoned by rodenticide. It is our understanding that SGARs were identified and that the poisons are no longer being used at the zoo. It is tragic that it took the death of these innocent creatures for the zoo to discontinue use of SGARs, but we need to ensure that similar deaths do not continue to occur across the state among our vulnerable animal populations.

In 2020, California became the first state in the country to impose a ban on SGARs. We are hopeful that Connecticut will keep up with the progress made in our neighboring states of Massachusetts and New Jersey and in following California's lead on banning SGARs statewide.

Second, regarding **HB 5223 AAC Minor Revisions to Agriculture Related Statutes, Section 1** of this bill is **harmful to Connecticut's animals and must be removed from the bill.**

Section 1 of this bill redefines "animal" for the purposes of Sections 328-367a of the statutes by limiting the protections of the chapter to only animals that "humans selectively breed in captivity" and that live "in close association with humans". It further narrows the definition of animal for amphibians, fish, and reptiles to only those "that are offered for sale by a pet shop for which there is certification of captive breeding".

The protections provided to animals under this chapter of the statutes include the ability of Animal Control Officers (ACOs) to intervene to prevent cruelty (Section 22-329) and to seize or seek forfeiture of animals when they have reasonable cause to believe that cruelty is occurring (Section 329a). Not only would feral and community cats and other animals now be unprotected from cruelty under this bill as written, but it is important to understand that people keep animals as pets that are obtained from sources other than pet shops or places where they are selectively bred in captivity by humans. Under this definition, my pets would be excluded from protection as would thousands of animals across the state, perhaps including yours.

In addition to the problems with the definition in this section, redefining animal" in the bill can lead to confusion as to " animal " in other statutory sections. It can only serve to impede services to those (animals) the statutes were meant to protect. Please strike Section 1 of this bill.

And finally, regarding **HB 5224 AAC the Protection of Spiny Dogfish**, we **support** the bill which prohibits the possession, sale, trade, or distribution of shark fins. Shark finning is the cruel and despicable act of removing fins from sharks and discarding the rest of the shark back into the ocean. Please act favorably on HB 5224.

In summary, we support HB 5217 with the needed amendment to ban the use and sale of SGARs statewide, oppose HB 5223 and support HB 5224.

Thank you for your time and attention and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

February 27, 2024

Re: HB 5223, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to Agriculture Related Statutes

Dear Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

My name is Andrea Dobras and I am a Connecticut resident, and board member for CT for Animals Education Fund. I strongly urge you to **oppose** HB-5223 – An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to Agriculture Related Statutes.

Section one of this bill redefines animals to only include those who are selectively bred in captivity and those who live in close association with humans. It also future narrows the definition for animals for amphibians, fish, and reptiles to only those who are offered for sale by a pet shop or which there is certification of captive breeding.

Section one of this bill creates an exclusion of animals who need protection against acts of cruelty.

Section one of this bill needs to be removed.

Thank you for your consideration and **opposition to HB-5223.**

Sincerely,

Andrea Dobras
Board Member , CT for Animals Education Fund
116 Morgan Avenue, East Haven, CT 06512

Name: Andrea Kerin

Title: Animals and Wildlife Advocate

Organization or Agency:

Topic: HB05223 - AAC MINOR REVISIONS TO AGRICULTURE RELATED STATUTES.

Opposes

Testimony:

Dear Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

Please oppose this bill as it is written. Section 1, as it is written, is harmful to Connecticut's animals and the countless people who seek to help them.

Section 1 of this bill redefines "animal" to only animals that "humans selectively breed in captivity" and that live "in close association with humans". It further narrows the definition of animal for amphibians, fish, and reptiles to only those "that are offered for sale by a pet shop for which there is certification of captive breeding".

The protections provided to animals under this chapter of the statutes include the ability of Animal Control Officers (ACOs) to intervene to prevent cruelty (Section 22-329) and to seize or seek forfeiture of animals when they have reasonable cause to believe that cruelty is occurring (Section 329a). BUT Feral cats and other animals would now be unprotected from cruelty under this bill as written. Many people keep animals as pets that are obtained from sources other than pet shops or places where they are selectively bred in captivity by humans. Under this definition, many pets would be excluded from protection as would thousands of animals across the state, perhaps including yours.

Section 1 of this bill needs to be removed.

Sincerely,
Andrea Kerin

Environment Committee Public Hearing 2-28-24

Testimony of Karen Laski

HB 5217 An Act Concerning the Use of Certain Rodenticides – Support if Amended

HB 5223 – Minor Revisions to Agriculture Related Statutes – Support if Section I is removed

HB 5224 – The Protection of Spiny Dogfish – Support

Good Morning Honorable Members of Environment,

My name is Karen Laski and I have been a volunteer advocate for animals for 57 years. I support House Bill 5217 – An Act Concerning the Use of Certain Rodenticides if the bill is amended to ban the sale and the use of second generation rodenticides. If these second generation anticoagulant rodenticides are still used, then animals and humans are still in danger if they come in contact with the poisons. Death from these poisons is a slow and painful process, sometimes lasting 4 days to 2 weeks. Bleeding internally, externally, seizures, tremors, neurologic difficulties, vomiting, diarrhea and respiratory paralysis are symptoms that lead to death. Anyone who may happen to ingest and animal who has been poisoned such as eagles, owls, hawks raccoons, skunks, squirrels, crows opossums and many others, like perhaps your companion animal will suffer the same effects.

There are other ways to remove rodents from areas of concern and these methods are available to pesticide companies. Please ban the sale and the use of these hideous and archaic poisons.

For House Bill 5223 – Minor Revisions to Agriculture Related Statutes- I support if Section I is removed. Redefining animals will limit their protections and will put more animals in danger of being cruelly treated. We rely on ACO's and Police Officers to help us with investigating acts of cruelty or to protect us from animals who may be considered a threat to us.

I recently talked with my local Animal Control Officer the other day about an animal that I wasn't sure was a coyote or a lost dog. He helped me identify on the spot by our phone conversation. He also told me that he loves his job with wildlife and companion animals. All of the animals he cares for or intervenes with are important and that his job is fulfilling to him. Please don't redefine animals in this bill.

I completely support House Bill 5224 – The Protection of Spiny Dogfish

Shark finning is a sadistic practice that leaves a shark without mobility and takes the fins to be used as a so-called delicacy while the body of the shark is thrown back in the sea. It sinks to the bottom and the shark suffocates or bleeds to death while other sea creatures are biting what is left of this poor creature. Sharks are an important part of the eco-system and losing millions of them every year to profit from their fins is upsetting the vital role they play in maintaining marine balance. Sharks are a keystone of the food chain who help to balance coral systems and keep the carbon cycle in motion.

Please let compassion and promoting ecological balance rule your votes.

Thank you for your work

Karen Laski

Name: Marlene Wilhelm

Title: President

Organization or Agency: The House Rabbit Connection

Topic: HB05223 - AAC MINOR REVISIONS TO AGRICULTURE RELATED STATUTES.
Supports

Testimony:

HB05217

Please Support this bill with needed amendment.

Rodenticides affect more than just the animals they are intended to manage. As such I would like to see a ban on their sale and use in our state.

HB05217 as drafted is deficient and must be amended to ban the use and sale of SGARs statewide.

Second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides are powerful poisons that stay in tissues and organs of rodents for months, making it easy for predators that naturally eat rodents – such as owls, eagles, and hawks -- to get a lethal dose of toxins. In this way, the use of SGARs is counterproductive to rodent control by poisoning, harming, and killing the very animals that naturally regulate rodent populations throughout Connecticut.

Tragically, unintentional secondary poisonings from SGARs are increasing at an alarming rate and victims include wildlife, pets, and children.

HB5223

Please OPPOSE Section 1 of this bill. It is harmful to Connecticut's animals and must be removed from the bill.

I urge the Environment Committee to strike Section 1 of this Bill. Section 1 of this bill redefines "animal" to only animals that "humans selectively breed in captivity" and that live "in close association with humans". It further narrows the definition of animal for amphibians, fish, and reptiles to only those "that are offered for sale by a pet shop for which there is certification of captive breeding".

The protections provided to animals under this chapter of the statutes include the ability of Animal Control Officers (ACOs) to intervene to prevent cruelty (Section 22-329) and to seize or seek forfeiture of animals when they have reasonable cause to believe that cruelty is occurring (Section 329a). Feral cats and other animals would now be unprotected from cruelty under this bill as written. Many people keep animals as pets that are obtained from sources other than pet shops or places where they are selectively bred in captivity by humans. Under this definition, many pets would be excluded from protection as would thousands of animals across the state, perhaps including yours. Section 1 of this bill needs to be removed.

HB5224

Please SUPPORT this bill which prohibits the possession, sale, trade, or distribution of shark fins. Shark finning is the cruel and despicable act of removing fins from sharks and discarding the rest of the shark back into the ocean. Please act favorably on HB 5224.

Thank you,

Marlene Wilhelm