

**The Connecticut Horse Council, Inc.**  
**End of Legislative Session Report--June 2007**

**CHC is very pleased to report that two bills that we were promoting, SB1223 and SB284, both passed and have now been signed by the Governor!! Also, horses and livestock have been added for consideration in town disaster plans!**

As members know, The Connecticut Horse Council, Inc. is constantly at the forefront of issues that affect horse owners in the state, and this year was no exception. Many good bills died this legislative session, however CHC advocated for horse owners down to the last hour.

We are especially pleased to report that SB1223, which creates an Equine Advisory Council to work with the Department of Environment Protection, has passed and will now become law. This council will ensure that trails remain open to equestrians going forward. Representative Debra Lee Hovey was responsible for championing this bill. CHC was joined by the Oxford Horse & Livestock Association (OHLA), The Newtown Bridle Lands Conservancy (NBLA), and the Southbury Horse & Livestock Association (SHLA) in pushing this legislation.

Also of particular note is SB284 that was introduced by Senator Roraback on behalf of CHC member Attorney Liz Burne and CHC. This bill provides a tool to the courts to protect victims of domestic violence. It allows judges, at their discretion, to include animals in protective and restraining orders. This does not change the status or definition of animals at all, but it permits judges to assist victims of domestic violence by ensuring abusers cannot use animals in the household to coerce and intimidate victims. This legislation was recently passed in both Maine and Vermont.

Finally, CHC acted to ensure that horses and livestock were included in state and town disaster plans. The Pets Act, HB5186 was a bill introduced to require that pets and service animals be included in disaster plans. However, horses & livestock were inadvertently omitted from this particular bill. When CHC became aware of this problem, it was late in session. However, we pushed for an amendment to another bill, and we were successful. The amended bill which named horses & livestock, passed the day before close of session.

We are disappointed to report that the bill CHC worked to introduced which would require education and training of Animal Control Officers HB5522, failed again this session. Most people are not aware that municipal ACO's receive no training, and CHC feels that this does a disservice not only to the animals and the public, but also to the ACO's themselves. We plan to reintroduce this bill again next session, and will continue to pursue it until we are successful.

CHC would like to thank all horsepeople who contacted their legislators to urge them to support these bills. Your voice mattered. Also, CHC would like to offer our sincere thanks to the following legislators who were extremely supportive during this session: Senators Andrew Roraback and Tony Guglielmo, and Representatives Debra Lee Hovey, Penny Bacchiochi, Lawrence Miller and Bill Aman, their work made all the difference. And, if these are your legislators, please consider sending them a note letting them know their efforts are

appreciated. And, we would also like to thank OHLA, NBLA and SHLA for their work this legislative session.

### **THE FOLLOWING BILLS PASSED THIS SESSION:**

**SB1223 AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EQUINE ADVISORY COUNCIL** was signed by the governor on 5/22/2007. This bill establishes an Equine Advisory Council to help the Department of Environmental Protection study state horse trail preservation. This bill will help keep trails open to horses, and is a large step forward for trail riders. CHC worked with Representative Debra Lee Hovey on the passage of this bill. **NOTE: this bill was amended after HB5595 which named specific trails for protection, died.**

**SB 284 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF PETS IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES**, was signed by the Governor on 6/20/2007. The bill will protect animals in domestic violence cases by authorizing a court to include a prohibition on harming a pet when it issues a restraining or protective order. CHC worked with Senator Andrew Roraback to introduce this bill, and it allows judges, at their discretion, to include animals in protective and restraining orders. **(Note-this bill does not change the status of any animal, and is not a mandate).**

**HB5186 AN ACT CONCERNING THE EVACUATION OF PETS AND SERVICE ANIMALS AND APPROVAL OF THE LOCAL EMERGENCY PLAN OF OPERATIONS.** The bill requires towns to include the evacuation of pets and service animals in state and local emergency plans of operation. **NOTE: The original language of this bill inadvertently did not include horses and livestock. CHC discovered this omission, and acted to amend another department of homeland security bill, so that horses & livestock will now be considered in the emergency planning process.**

**SB872 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A FARMLAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD, A STATE BUILDING CODE FOR AGRICULTURE, AND ZONING REGULATION OF FARMING.** This bill requires the State Bond Commission to vote on whether to authorize the issuance of bonds that the legislature approved for agricultural land preservation programs but the commission has not allocated. It also (1) allows the Department of Agriculture (DOAG) commissioner to request such approved, unallocated bond funds, when available, for pending agricultural land preservation transactions above \$ 5 million and (2) requires the bond commission to vote on whether to approve such funds. The bill also creates a 12-member Farmland Preservation Advisory Board to help DOAG with its purchase of development rights program and other efforts to preserve agricultural lands. **NOTE: CHC SUPPORTED THIS BILL.**

**HB 1079 AN ACT CONCERNING DOGS THAT ATTACK DOMESTIC ANIMALS OR LIVESTOCK.** Statement of purpose: To allow animal control officers to investigate and issue orders regarding dogs that attack domestic animals and livestock. **NOTE: CHC was monitoring this bill and had no formal position.**

### **THE FOLLOWING BILLS FAILED THIS SESSION:**

**SB 1080 AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPOUNDMENT OF ROAMING LIVESTOCK AND FLIGHTLESS BIRDS.** This bill would have enabled animal control

officers to impound roaming livestock and certain flightless birds, to establish an owner and keeper notification process, to establish fines for noncompliance by such owners and keepers and to enable municipal animal control officers to dispose of such livestock and flightless birds, subject to certain conditions. **NOTE: CHC OPPOSED THIS BILL.**

**HB 5522 AN ACT CONCERNING TRAINING FOR MUNICIPAL ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS.** This bill would have established a municipal animal control officer training program. Currently, there are no education or certification requirements for municipal animal control officers. CHC feels strongly that this does a disservice not only to animals, but also to the public, and the ACO's themselves. We have pushed for this legislation for several years, and will continue to push for passage again next session. **NOTE: CHC SUPPORTED THIS BILL.**

**SB 30 AN ACT CONCERNING AN APPROPRIATION TO REPAIR AND RECONSTRUCT THE 4-H CAMP IN FRANKLIN.** This bill would have provided funds to repair and reconstruct the infrastructure of the 4-H camp in Franklin. CHC believes in the importance of teaching youth, and 4-H's role in education. **NOTE: CHC SUPPORTED THIS BILL.**

**HB 5464 AN ACT CONCERNING COMMERCIAL HORSE BOARDING AND TRAINING FACILITIES.** Statement of Purpose: To ensure the safety of equestrians and horses at commercial boarding and training facilities. This bill would have given authority to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to regulate commercial horse boarding and training facilities. **NOTE: CHC OPPOSED THIS BILL.**

**SB 994 AN ACT REMOVING JURISDICTION OF STATE PARKS AND FORESTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.** Statement of purpose: To remove jurisdiction of state parks and forests from the Department of Environmental Protection and to create a new agency to manage such parks and forests. **NOTE: CHC did not have a formal position on this bill, and was monitoring its progress.**

**HB 6579 AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR THE CONNECTICUT VETERINARY MEDICAL DIAGNOSTIC LAB.** This bill would have provided funding to provide for surveillance of public health related diseases in animals. CHC recognizes the important role the Diagnostic Lab plays in our community. **NOTE: CHC SUPPORTED THIS BILL. Also note: even though this bill failed, the funds were allocated through a line item in the state budget.**

The Connecticut Horse Council, Inc. is an all volunteer organization dedicated to serving the needs of the horse industry in Connecticut. Please consider joining today. For more information about CHC, please visit [www.cthorsecouncil.org](http://www.cthorsecouncil.org) . For more information about these bills, please contact CHC president Amy Stegall at [legislation@cthorsecouncil.org](mailto:legislation@cthorsecouncil.org) .

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD—UNITED WE RIDE & DRIVE!**