



**TESTIMONY OF THE PET INDUSTRY JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL
FOR CONSIDERATION BEFORE THE VERMONT HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FISH, WILDLIFE AND WATER RESOURCES
ON VERMONT HOUSE BILL 552**

January 20, 2016

POSITION: NEUTRAL

To whom it may concern:

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) appreciates the opportunity to submit the following comments in response to Vermont House Bill 552 which would amend Chapter 10, Section 5401 of the Vermont Statutes relating to conservation and recovery of threatened or endangered species.

By way of background, PIJAC is the nation's largest pet trade association representing the interests of all segments of the U.S. pet industry, from pet stores and distributors to manufacturers of pet supplies, pet food, as well as companion animal breeders and hobbyists in Vermont and across the country. In its representation of the pet industry, PIJAC has worked with U.S. government and international organizations involved with the management and conservation of wildlife for several decades.

We also work with many governmental entities on legislative and regulatory activity impacting companion animals, such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Park Service, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to ensure the availability of pets, promote responsible pet care and ensure the pet trade does not cause environmental damage or human health issues. Examples of these partnerships include the *Habitattitude*[™] campaign and a Memorandum of Understanding with the USFWS and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to utilize rapid screening methods to prevent the introduction of invasive species not yet in the United States. We also partner with the CDC in efforts to educate breeders, retailers and the general public in methods to minimize exposure to zoonotic diseases.

PIJAC does not oppose Vermont House Bill 552 as written. However, we want to encourage the House, Fish, Wildlife & Water Resources Committee and the Vermont General Assembly to use sound science when advising public policy decisions like clarifying how threatened or endangered plants are regulated and designating critical habitats necessary for conservation of threatened or endangered species in the state of Vermont.

PIJAC would be happy to work with the state and lend our expertise when addressing future endangered species issues. Please do not hesitate to contact us at 202/452-1525 (ext. 1070) or via email at bob@pijac.org for further information.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Likins, III
Vice President of Government Affairs
Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council

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