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The Connecticut Legislative session opened January 5th and runs until June 8th 2011. Connecticut Horse Council is tracking a number of bills which may potentially impact our members.

CHC urges our members to testify at the hearings or submit written testimony to the committees.

Members should also email their own legislators to ask for their support and/or cosponsor the bills listed below. Some have already had public hearings

NOTE: *Even though a bill has already been "Heard"— you can still ask your legislators to support the bill as a hearing does not mean that the bill passed.*

To see the full text of the bills, please visit the Connecticut General Assembly website at www.cga.ct.gov and type the bill number into the search box. You may also obtain contact information for your legislators on this site. CHC encourages our members to contact their elected officials to express opinions. Should you have any questions or need assistance, please contact CHC at president@cthorsecouncil.org.

Please go to the CHC website for updated Alerts and additional information on addressing the legislation: www.cthorsecouncil.org

When contacting legislators please remember to be respectful and polite, and use the bill number and title.

Remember to sign your name and full address.

THE FOLLOWING BILLS ARE PRIORITY ISSUES FOR CHC:
Please contact your legislators and ask they SUPPORT the bills below

HB 5010 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESERVATION OF CERTAIN TRAILS FOR EQUINE USE. Purpose: To preserve certain horse trails in the state. ***NOTES:*** This bill would expand the list of specifically named trails available for equestrian use. The bill is designed to protect equestrian access to multi-use trails by preventing those trails from ever prohibiting equestrians.

HB 5763 AN ACT CONCERNING THE LIABILITY OF PERSONS WHO VOLUNTARILY ASSIST ANIMALS IN AN EMERGENCY. To provide immunity to persons who voluntarily render assistance to animals during an emergency. *NOTES:* This bill would provide liability protection for people who assist towns and animal control officers during individual emergencies involving animals.

SB 720 AN ACT CREATING PENALTIES FOR CAUSING HARM TO, OR THE DEATH OF, A VULNERABLE USER OF A PUBLIC WAY. Purpose: To provide penalties for causing harm to, or the death of, a vulnerable user of a public way. *NOTES:* This bill would increase penalties for motorists whose reckless driving causes harm to other users of roadways such as bicyclists, pedestrians, highway workers, horseback riders and others.

Public Hearing held February 14th – Transportation Committee

Bills pertaining to Municipal Liability:

**FYI: these are multiple bills that have been introduced for this same topic.*

BACKGROUND: On May 2010 a jury awarded \$2.9 million to a mountain biker who was injured by running into a gate at the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) Reservoir in West Hartford. As a result, the MDC has given serious consideration to closing their lands to the public, and other municipalities and organizations could possibly do the same. This verdict could have a chilling effect on trail access around the state.

CHC is working with many other groups in support of crucial legislation to correct the current situation and protect municipal land owners who open their lands to the public for recreational use at no cost.

SB 831 AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL LIABILITY FOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES ON CERTAIN OPEN SPACE LANDS.

Purpose: To encourage municipalities and other entities to keep open space lands open to the public for recreational purposes.

Public Hearing held January 31st 2011- Environment Committee

SB 43 AN ACT EXPANDING THE RECREATIONAL LAND USE ACT

SB 90 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECREATIONAL LAND USE ACT

HB 5254 AN ACT EXPANDING THE RECREATIONAL LAND USE ACT

Purpose: To encourage municipalities and other entities to keep open space lands open to the public for recreational purposes.

Public Hearing held February 14th 2011- Planning and Development Committee