



Northeast  
Agribusiness  
& Feed Alliance

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February 27, 2024

Vermont State House  
House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs  
115 State Street Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

**RE: Vermont H. 626 – An act relating to animal welfare**

Dear Members of the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs:

The Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance (NEAFA) is reaching out to you in opposition to the provisions of H. 626 and appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the bill.

NEAFA represents the agribusiness community in New York and New England, including feed manufacturers, feed ingredient and animal health product suppliers, animal nutritionists, trucking companies and agronomic input suppliers. NEAFA's mission is to support and grow a sustainable agribusiness industry in the northeast.

The members of NEAFA hold the welfare of animals at the forefront of all our endeavors. We recognize the reality of animal welfare issues and our members are often called upon to address the nutritional needs of neglected animals. Our opposition to H 626 is not the premise of the bill, but rather the source of funding. If the citizens of Vermont feel the social mission of this bill is a priority, the new Division of Animal Welfare should be funded through appropriations made by the General Assembly. Placing a tax on businesses who have not contributed to the problem, but rather whose purpose is to assure the wellbeing of animals, is not an appropriate step.

The members of NEAFA appreciate the work of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture to assure the regulation of animal food through inspections and sampling and we support the collection of registration and tonnage fees from commercial and custom animal feeds for these purposes. Supporting the social mission of H 626 for animal welfare and for the purpose of protecting the health and safety of Vermonters should not be borne by animal food businesses.

NEAFA is in opposition to the new tax of \$10 per product on commercial feed, which would raise the cost of registering animal feed and pet food in Vermont from the current \$105 per product to \$115 per product.

Sincerely,

Jenny Mills, MS  
President, Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance