

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-146 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF LIVESTOCK FROM CERTAIN

Title: WILDLIFE.

Vote Date: 3/4/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/20/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Environment Committee

Co-sponsors:

Rep. Craig C. Fishbein, 90th Dist.

Rep. Mark W. Anderson, 62nd Dist.

Rep. Geraldo C. Reyes, 75th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

To authorize the taking of certain wildlife that injure or kill livestock or that caused crop damage in the proceeding growing season.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

Made technical grammatical changes for clarity.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Katie S. Dykes, Commissioner, CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

DEEP supports SB 146, which allows farmers to protect livestock from wildlife attacks and prevent crop damage. DEEP looks forward to working further with the committee on the following specifics:

1. The Bill would allow DEEP to issue depredation permits based on an applicant having experienced verified crop damage during the preceding growing season. The bill also proposes to exempt applicants from attempting reasonable nonlethal efforts to protect agricultural crops prior to permit issuance, which is comparable to similar policy in Vermont, specific to corn fields. DEEP supports these exemptions in limited instances, such as for large, standing corn fields, when non-lethal methods typically have not proven to be effective.

2. The bill also adds defense of “livestock” as a permissible circumstance for killing a bear. DEEP supports this change for large livestock, as attacks can be unpredictable and cause significant and sudden damage. DEEP recommends expressly carving out poultry, pigs and animals enclosed in small pens, since electric fencing can typically provide effective protection.
3. The bill includes language stating that depredation permit applications do not require notarization, which is unnecessary since notarization is not required by statute and DEEP administratively removed this requirement for the 2025 season and plans to continue that approach going forward.

Bryan Hurlburt, Commissioner, Department of Connecticut Agriculture

DoAg supports SB 146. DoAg worked closely with DEEP on guidelines and farmer communications, following the passage of PA 23-77, to ensure farmers were able to utilize this permit to protect their crops and livestock within the parameters of legislation. Since then, a number of farmers have given feedback and are seeking the opportunity to be proactive in protecting their farms, rather than reactive. By allowing damages caused in the preceding growing season, while still being verified by DEEP, we are allowing farmers an additional measure in protecting their livelihood while still adhering to the permitting process.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

SHANNON CHATFIELD, A GREENER WORLD FARM, BARKHAMSTED, CT

Ms. Chatfield supports SB 164 because if the state expects them to uphold strong animal welfare standards, it must allow them the authority to intervene when those animals are under lethal attack. The Chatfield’s raise sheep, pigs, poultry, and cattle on pasture. A single breeding ewe on their farm represents \$5000. A pig represents \$3000. Coexistence cannot mean unlimited financial loss and repeated predation is not sustainable, and it is not humane for the animals being attacked. This is not about hunting for sport or food. This is about responsibility, animal welfare, and the survival of Connecticut’s working farms.

Tracey McDougall, Executive Director, The Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The Connecticut Farm Bureau Supports SB 146 because this bill provided a tool for farmers to defend livestock during an active attack. Most farmers have already invested in preventive measures such as electric fencing, secure feed storage, and other deterrents. However, when those measures fail, this bill allows for immediate defensive action as an option. Providing farmers with the ability to protect their livestock is both common sense and necessary for maintain viable farm operations.

Liz Forcier, Connecticut Resident

Ms. Forcier Supports SB 146 and respectfully asks the legislature to consider providing a clear legal pathway for livestock owners to take timely action to protect their animals during threatening encounters. Evaluating structured management options, including a tag-based system with required education to ensure safety, ethics, and responsible participation, while also generating funding for wildlife programs. And lastly, expanding public education efforts so residents of all ages understand wildlife safety, appropriate behavior around bears, and available mitigation tools.

15 Farmers, Veterinary Assistants and Private Citizens Support SB 146 because it provides Connecticut farmers with a protocol and responsible pathway to protect livestock and Crops from wildlife damage.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Annie Hornish, Connecticut Senior State Director, Humane World for Animals

The Humane World for Animals Oppose SB 146 because human-bear conflicts are a “people problem”, not a bear problem, and can be resolved and prevented through education and application of simple non-lethal techniques like using bear-resistant trash cans, removing bird feeders while bears are out of the den, keeping dogs on leashes, and protecting farm animals (electric fencing). They urge the committee to reject SB 146 or amend it with the substitute language in Appendix “B”, which promotes durable, education-focused, and community-based solutions.

Susan Linker, CEO, Our Companions Animal Rescue & Sanctuary

Our Companions Animal Rescue & Sanctuary Oppose SB 146 because it authorizes lethal action based on past, generalized damage rather than current, verified behavior by a specific animal. Human behavior is the root cause of most of the human-bear conflict and education and prevention are the proven solutions. SB 146 expands lethal options without addressing the main cause of conflict and without ensuring that the specific offending animal is identified.

Nicole Rivard, Government Relations Manager, Friends of Animals

Friends of Animals Oppose SB 146 and believe this Committee should be discussing legislation that manages people. Chickens, goats, beehives, and fruit trees must be protected electric fencing. And a conflict reduction community grant program should provide money to communities for bear resistant trash cans and electric fencing.

Laura Simon, President, Connecticut Wildlife Rehabilitators Association

The Connecticut Wildlife Rehabilitators Association Opposes SB 146 because this bill is taking the wrong approach. The result would be to open up Connecticut for the unjustified killing of bears and orphaning of cubs. Bearwise.org and Bearsmart.com have educational resources and model co-existence plans that have been used successfully in other parts of the country and can be utilized here in Connecticut to relieve farmer conflicts with bears and boost co-existence. Connecticut should not be opened for sport hunting under the guise of protecting livestock and crops.

Lori Brown, Executive Director, CT League of Conservation Voters

CT League of Conservation Voters Opposes SB 146 and want to convey their concerns in expanding the killing of bears. CTLCV requests that SB 146 be rejected until there is a well-resourced effort at helping farmers employ non-lethal means to prevent human/bear conflicts. They also believe that there are problems with DEEP’s permitting criteria, monitoring, and enforcement when allowing farmers to kill bears.

168 Connecticut Residents sent in Testimony in Opposition of SB 146

Reported by: Judy Ganswindt

Date: March 10, 2026

