

Testimony to support the Pet Supplies Donation Act

Good afternoon. My name is Sally Tom. I live in Silver Spring, I have volunteered over 20 years with an animal rescue group, and I work at a big box pet supply store. Several years ago I asked our store manager why we threw so many bags and cans of dog and cat food, as well as other pet supplies, in the trash. He said, "liability." The company is afraid a shelter or a rescue group would sue if food donated by the company caused an animal to become ill. In short, lack of protection against an extremely unlikely, hypothetical lawsuit leads to actual, real, tremendous waste.

Four basic facts explain why this bill should be passed.

One, 30 years ago the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act solved this liability problem at the federal level for restaurants and other retailers that donate food to organizations that feed people. We have done it for people, let's also do it for our animal companions.

Two, huge amounts of edible, safe pet food end up in landfills every year. Some of it is expired, but as you probably know, "expired" food is almost always quite safe to eat. A subsequent manager guesstimated our store throws out an average of 50 pounds of kibble per day. The math is easy: 50 pounds per day x 365 days year x 3000 stores nationwide = 54,750,000 pounds of kibble. This food belongs in the hands of shelters and rescue groups, in the tummies of homeless animals, and not in

mountains of kibble in our landfills. In short, there is no supply problem.

Three, unlike with human food, we're also talking about all other kinds of pet supplies. Anything a store sells can and often does end up in a landfill. The thought of all those useable supplies ending up in our landfills is shocking and appalling.

Four, animal shelters and rescue groups desperately, urgently need donations of retailers' food and supplies because they allow those organizations to spend their limited funds on services and goods that aren't normally donated. In short, there is no demand problem.

There is a distribution problem, and this bill can remove the blockade that keeps usable food and supplies trapped in landfills instead of in the hands of organizations that help animals.

I am happy to answer your questions and I urge you to pass this critically important legislation. Thank you!