



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0677-2011, Version: *

Res. No. 677

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass H.R.4356, the “Downed Animal and Food Safety Protection Act,” which would amend the Humane Methods of Livestock Slaughter Act of 1958 to ensure the humane slaughter of non-ambulatory livestock, thus preventing such meat from entering the human food supply.

By Council Members Vallone, Jr., Brewer, Rose, Williams, Gonzalez and Koo

Whereas, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), commonly referred to as “Mad Cow Disease,” is a progressive neurological disorder of cattle that is linked to a human disease called variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD), which humans can contract from exposure to BSE-contaminated food; and

Whereas, The United States Department of Health and Human Services website indicates that BSE related diseases are “invariably fatal and there is no known treatment or cure;” and

Whereas, News reports indicate that the cows that were struck with BSE in Washington in 2003, in Texas in 2005, and in Alabama in 2006 were all non-ambulatory or downed cows; and

Whereas, According to the United State’s Food and Drug Administration (FDA), it has been estimated that as of June 2008, 208 people worldwide became sick with vCJD and it is believed this was a result of ingesting food made from cows sick with BSE; and

Whereas, A Harvard Risk Assessment of BSE noted that there is a general consensus that non-ambulatory or downed animals are more likely to carry BSE than healthy animals; and

Whereas, In 2009, the FDA has taken additional steps to ensure that the food in the United States remains safe, including barring certain high-risk cow parts from being allowed to be used to make any animal feed; and

Whereas, Additionally, President Barack Obama announced that the United States Department of Agriculture promulgated a complete ban on the slaughter of cattle that become non-ambulatory disabled after passing initial inspection by Food Safety and Inspection Service inspection program personnel; and

Whereas, While many advocates were pleased with this action, some organizations including Farm Sanctuary, a group devoted to ending the suffering of downed animals through advocacy, policy and investigations, felt that the prohibition should have been extended to other downed animals including pigs, sheep, goats and other animals that can also carry bacteria and disease; and

Whereas, Currently, a bill before the United States Congress, known as the “Downed Animal and Food Safety Protection Act” (H.R.4356) would amend the Humane Methods of Livestock Slaughter Act of 1958 to require that any meat dealer, packer, slaughter facility or establishment covered by the federal Meat Inspection Act be required to immediately and humanely euthanize all non-ambulatory livestock; and

Whereas, The bill would also make it unlawful for any inspector to pass through inspection any non-ambulatory livestock or carcass, including parts of a carcass, of non-ambulatory livestock, and would require any such livestock, carcass, or carcass parts to be clearly labeled as “inspected and condemned;” and

Whereas, By prohibiting inspectors from certifying meat from livestock too sick or injured to walk unassisted, the bill would codify the USDA’s ban on downed cattle in human food, and expand it to include other species, such as downed pigs and sheep; and

Whereas, The bill’s findings indicate that requiring the humane euthanization of non-ambulatory livestock in interstate and foreign commerce would reduce cruelty to animals and decrease the likelihood of the spread of diseases; and

Whereas, Preventing the meat of downed animals from entering the food supply is essential in protecting the health and well being of all New Yorkers, as well as all those who live in the United States; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to pass

H.R.4356, the “Downed Animal and Food Safety Protection Act,” which would amend the Humane Methods of Livestock Slaughter Act of 1958 to ensure the humane slaughter of non-ambulatory livestock, thus preventing such meat from entering the human food supply.

Res. No. 611/2006
JM
LS # 850