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Illinois Legislators Introduce Bill to Help Prevent Antifreeze Poisonings

If passed, Illinois would join nine other states requiring bittering agent

CHICAGO (Dec. 17, 2009) — The Humane Society of the United States and Humane Society Legislative Fund commend state Rep. Sara Feigenholtz and state Sen. Linda Holmes for introducing a bill to protect pets and children from poisoning as a result of ingesting antifreeze. The legislation is also endorsed by the Consumer Specialty Products Association and the Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association.

"Antifreeze poisoning is a horrible way for either pets or wildlife to die and we are grateful to Representative Feigenholtz and Senator Holmes for supporting this important safety measure," said Jordan Matyas, Illinois state director for The HSUS.

An estimated 1,400 children and 10,000 animals are poisoned each year after ingesting ethylene glycol, a highly toxic substance used in antifreeze and coolant in automobiles. Ethylene glycol's sweet smell and taste makes the deadly substance attractive to animals and children. The bill, H.B. 4722, would require manufacturers to add denatonium benzoate, an intensely bitter agent to antifreeze and coolant sold in the state that renders the product unpalatable. The additive would cost manufacturers an additional 2-3 cents per gallon.

"I am proud to sponsor legislation that will protect our kids and pets from antifreeze poisoning. For just a few cents we can save so much pain and suffering and I am confident we can pass this legislation," said Sen. Holmes.

"This legislation is significant as it presents an easily-implementable solution to the serious problem of antifreeze poisoning and will, as a result, protect Illinois children, pets and wildlife," said Rep. Feigenholtz.

The HSLF has worked to pass similar legislation in nine other states: Arizona, California, Maine, New Mexico, Oregon, Tennessee, Virginia, Vermont and Washington.

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