EXHIBIT 3
DATE 3/30/09
SB 221

Testimony in Support of S.B.No. 221
by Mary Lou Randour, Ph.D.
The Humane Society of the United States
March 16, 2009

On behalf of the over 33,000 Montana members and constituents of the Humane Society of the United States, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of S.B. No. 221, legislation that would require a person convicted of companion animal hoarding to undergo evaluation and treatment when considered appropriate by the sentencing court.

To briefly introduce myself, I have a Ph.D. psychologist with 20 years of experience as a practicing clinician. I have testified as an expert witness in multiple animal cruelty criminal trials. I have also published several training and research publications on the link between cruelty to animals and violence toward humans. Additionally, I have conducted workshops on the topic to train police, prosecutors, educators, domestic violence and child protective service personnel, and mental health professionals in over 20 states as well as Canada and Mexico. I also am the Chair of the Section on Animal-Human Interaction, Society of Counseling Psychology, American Psychological Association.

Animal hoarding is a serious public health problem for families and communities, one that can be quite costly for municipalities to resolve. Without proper intervention and treatment, recidivism is high (approaching 100%). S.B. 221 addresses the importance of intervention ,formalizing the existing approach so that animal hoarders can benefit by being offered help rather than just punishment. A bona fide diagnosis such as hoarding could increase the likelihood that an at-risk elder would be eligible for services.

Animal hoarding may be associated with, and perhaps caused by, a variety of physical and/or psychological disorders that require identification and intervention for the safety of individuals and the community. Neighbors, as well as each individual living in the home of an animal hoarder—children, adults, elders, and animals—are put at risk of serious physical and psychological trauma. Animal hoarding frequently occurs among older, isolated, socioeconomically disadvantaged women, however, it can cross any or all socioeconomic boundaries

Increasingly, mental health counseling or assessment is likely to be part of either pretrial proceedings, negotiated settlements, or post-trial sentencing for animal hoarding. Jane N. Nathanson, LCSW, LRC, CRC, a social worker with extensive experience working with animal hoarders in Massachusetts, has suggested that for successful counseling, the following steps are essential:

- Specify the individual(s) involved in monitoring treatment
- Provide information about the role of animals in the situation
- Specify the length and frequency of counseling
- A summary report provided to the probation of officer or court
- Stipulate terms for monitoring during the probationary period
- Identify resources for payment

The identification of animal hoarding and the provision of appropriate interventions can provide an important tool for public health and social services agencies, law enforcement, as well as public housing and mental health agencies in a community. With this tool, more people and animals will be spared unnecessary suffering and municipalities will be more likely to address a problem more efficiently and cost-effectively.

For an in-depth discussion of intervention in hoarding cases, the following website maintains state of the art research on this syndrome.
(http://www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding/pubs/AngellReport.pdf)

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer written testimony in support of S.B. No. 221. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or for additional information.