

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS



Ontario Conservation Centre

P.O. Box 2800, 4601 Guthrie Drive, Peterborough, Ontario K9J 8L5
Phone: (705) 748.6324 • Fax: (705) 748.9577 • Visit: www.ofah.org • Email: ofah@ofah.org

OFAH FILE: 450/790AC
March 1, 2016

Dear Members of the Federal Liberal Caucus:

On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH), our 100,000 members, supporters, and subscribers and our 725 member clubs across Ontario, we are writing with respect to recent discussions between Members regarding animal cruelty legislation. Having been intimately involved in previous discussions and debates around this issue over the past 17 years, we wanted to make you aware of past history and the potential impact this could have on key sectors of the Canadian economy.

Since 1999, there have been 18 government and private member's bills related to animal cruelty introduced in Parliament. All but two, Bill S-203 and Bill C-35, were defeated or lost due to prorogation. Each piece of legislation contained wording that caused considerable concern and was strongly opposed by a broad cross-section of communities; including animal-based agricultural producers, First Nations, the outdoor community, medical researchers, major colleges and universities, fairs and exhibitions, and some religious groups.

Recognizing the need to make changes to the Criminal Code with respect to animal cruelty to address concerns over "puppy mills," in 2008, former Liberal Senator John Bryden introduced Bill S-203, which was supported by the groups named above. The bill substantially increased the fines and penalties for animal cruelty from six months imprisonment and/or a \$2,000 fine, to five years imprisonment and/or a \$10,000 fine and prohibition of animal ownership. Bill S-203 made the distinction between penalties for two categories of offences: one for injuring animals intentionally or recklessly; the second for injuring animals through criminal neglect. The bill did not, however, contain language that would impede or prevent traditional and accepted animal uses and practices. Bill C-35 passed into law in 2015, and further raised the penalties for animal cruelty against law enforcement and service animals. That bill was also supported by all of the communities named above.

The legacy of the debate around animal cruelty legislation in Parliament has been long, contentious, and highly divisive. However, unintentional animal cruelty legislation similar in nature to the previous iterations could criminalize lawful activities associated with food production, hunting, fishing, trapping, medical research, sports and entertainment, and impact on private ownership of animals. Many of the previous bills contained language that was not in line with definitions in the Criminal Code, and an expanded definition of "animal" that would include fish, reptiles, and crustaceans, such as lobsters and crabs. They proposed moving animal cruelty out of the Offences Against Special Property section into its own section and removed certain wording, thereby eliminating all case law for courts to rely on.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS

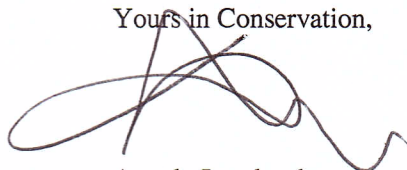
March 1, 2016

Page Two

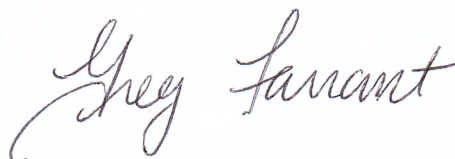
Animal use industries in Canada make a significant contribution to the national economy. For instance, hunting, fishing, trapping, and outfitting contribute \$15.2 billion annually, aggregate Canadian farm cash receipts for livestock and poultry \$21.5 billion and commercial fishing \$2.2 billion. These same sectors have always been strongly supportive of legislation and regulations that support the humane use of animals, and are prepared to support reasonable legislative changes. However, we would respectfully point out that these same sectors are already subject to a myriad of federal/provincial/territorial statutes and regulations under a diversity of departments, which reflect varying jurisdictional needs and conditions. The introduction of new animal cruelty legislation based upon a philosophically driven agenda would, once again, jeopardize the animal use community with little regard for the impact and harm of same

We thank you your time and attention in this matter, and trust you will not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance.

Yours in Conservation,



Angelo Lombardo
Executive Director



Greg Farrant
Manager, Government Affairs & Policy

AL/GF/gh

cc: CWF Affiliates
OFAH Board of Directors
Matt DeMille, OFAH Manager, Fish & Wildlife Services