



February 17, 2023

Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
1341 Baseline Road
Ottawa Ontario K1A 0C5

Via email

Dear Minister Bibeau,

On behalf of Animal Justice Canada, the Winnipeg Humane Society, the Canadian Horse Defence Coalition, Manitoba Animal Save, the Vancouver Humane Society, Animal Save Movement, Humane Canada, World Animal Protection, and the BC SPCA I am writing with respect to the government's commitment to ban the live export of horses for slaughter. This commitment was made by the Liberal Party of Canada in its September 2021 election campaign platform and is reflected in your December 16, 2021 mandate letter from the Prime Minister. It reflects the will of Canadians and the fact that transporting horses overseas for slaughter is a completely unnecessary practice that puts horses at significant risk of suffering, injury, and even death during transport.

As you know, MP Alistair MacGregor presented Parliamentary e-petition e-4190 in the House of Commons on February 13, 2023 urging you to move quickly to make good on the government's commitment. This most recent Parliamentary petition, initiated by Canadian icon Jann Arden, gathered nearly 40,000 signatures.

In response to inquiries from animal protection groups and the media about this issue, you have noted that your Ministry is still in the early stages of analyzing this aspect of your mandate and that you are consulting industry stakeholders on the issue. You have also noted, both in these statements and in your response to Petition No. 431-00277 presented to the House of Commons by MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith on June 17, 2020 that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (“CFIA”) is focused on ensuring compliance with the requirements set out under the Health of Animals Regulations, including in particular the requirement that horses in transport go no longer than 28 hours without food, water, and rest.

Since the 2021 election, more than 2,000 horses have been exported from Canada to Japan for slaughter. Some of these horses were shipped out of Winnipeg on December 12, 2022. Because of flight delays, the horses were in transport without food, water, and rest for well over 28 hours. By the time they left Winnipeg at 9:18am that day, they had already been in transit without food, water, and rest for approximately 16.5 hours and there was no way that the 28 hour limit would be met if they continued on to Japan. Yet those involved proceeded with the shipment. Further delays in Seattle resulted in an even longer journey. So arduous were the conditions that at least three horses collapsed during the trip.¹

Animal Justice, the Winnipeg Humane Society, Canadian Horse Defence Coalition, and Manitoba Animal Save contacted the CFIA to alert them to this violation of the Regulations. The Agency repeatedly refused to take any enforcement action, though it did acknowledge that the 28 hour limit was not met.² Instead, the CFIA indicated that it “continues to remind all parties involved in the export of horses by air about their responsibilities”. With respect, reminding companies that profit from the live export of horses for slaughter about regulatory requirements without enforcing those requirements is unacceptable and leaves vulnerable horses at risk.

The CFIA’s demonstrated unwillingness to enforce the requirements in the Health of Animals Regulations to protect the health and wellbeing of horses exported from Canada for slaughter overseas further underscores the urgency of the need to ban this practice. The ban could be implemented through relatively simple amendments to the *Health of Animals Act* or Health of Animals Regulations.³ In public statements, Agriculture Canada staff have suggested that there may be challenges in banning the live export of horses for slaughter and not for other purposes (such as sport competitions). With respect, this is a relatively easy matter to resolve and Canada can and should have regard to legislative language adopted or under consideration in other jurisdictions, such as the UK and Colorado, to ban the live export of certain animals for the purposes of slaughter only.⁴

¹ See: <https://canadianhorsedefencecoalition.org/three-horses-collapse-on-horse-flight-that-exceeds-time-limit/>.

² This correspondence is enclosed.

³ Note that over the years, three NDP Private Member’s Bills have been introduced containing proposed statutory wording to ban live horse exports for slaughter.

⁴ See, e.g. <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2880> (see s 40); <https://s3.amazonaws.com/fn-document-service/file-by-sha384/938700707050ddfa8c6e060cc0c151ed386ae678e50276d0a5e79e01ec4035b1fb051573762bb03169f3f7acedd5c366>.

Our organizations remain committed to working with you and the Ministry to support your efforts to ban the live export of horses for slaughter. We urge you to move quickly to stop this cruel practice.

Yours truly,



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On behalf of:

Animal Justice Canada	Winnipeg Humane Society
The Canadian Horse Defence Coalition	Manitoba Animal Save
Vancouver Humane Society	Animal Save Movement
Humane Canada	World Animal Protection
BC SPCA	

CC: MP Alistair MacGregor – NDP Agriculture Critic
Sarah Sullivan – Deputy Director, Livestock Policy – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada