



June 2011

Dear Friend,

Rarely do we get an opportunity to do something groundbreaking to protect animals and the environment. We have just been given such an opportunity.

However, it comes with appalling dangers. *If* we fail to make good on this unique offering, we will fail the animals and the environment. If we fail them, they could be worse off in the future than they are today. Far worse, I fear.

Please, I need your always unfailing advocacy and generous financial support to realize this wonderful chance we've been given to do enormous good.

Much animal cruelty and killing, much environmental degradation and destruction is due to international trade. Trade in meat, poultry, and dairy products. Trade in seafood. Trade in oil and gas. Trade in forestry products. Trade in luxury fur and leather.

All these economic sectors are, in fact, dependent for most of their profits not on domestic consumption, but on international trade.

It's not "trade" itself that is the threat, but rather how these products are produced for trade. In Canada, they are generally produced with wanton – even criminal – disregard for environmental destruction and animal suffering.

Environmental destruction and animal cruelty (and I would add indentured labor level wages, dangerous work conditions, and threats to human health) are the norm as Canadian industry – aided and abetted by our federal and provincial governments – relentlessly and recklessly drive for lower and lower costs regardless of the harms done to animals, the environment, and people.

Animal and environmental protection groups across Canada have been heroic and steadfast in their efforts to stop the killing, cruelty, and destruction. But here's the paradox: their greatest successes usually come when they take their fights not to Ottawa or our provincial capitals, but rather to politicians and consumers in the countries with whom we trade. Some examples:

- British Columbia did not improve its forestry management practices until Canadian and European environmental groups persuaded Germany and other European countries to stop importing BC logs and lumber until the province – under duress – adopted responsible, sustainable forestry practices.
- Canada's sealing industry now slaughters less than 10% of the animals it did just a few years ago, thanks to Canadian and international anti-seal hunt organizations campaigning not in Canada, but in Europe. Europe

now bans the importation of seal products, not just from Canada's seal hunt, but from all seal hunts, saving hundreds of thousands of animal lives every year.

- We're making progress on reducing the environmental damage caused by Alberta Tar Sands operations not by working in Edmonton or Ottawa, but rather in Washington and Brussels.

It's a shameful testament to the woeful inadequacy of Canada's governmental and electoral system – and a condemnation of our politicians – that we have to go the capitals of other nations and ask their political leaders to protect our environment and the animals with whom we share our country. But, that's an issue and a fight – a long one it will be – for another day.

Today, our task is to grasp the opportunity at hand and do all we can to protect our environment and the animals as best we can.

Our new opportunity to help the animals and the environment comes in the form of a massive trade agreement being negotiated (even as you read this letter) by Canada and the European Union (EU). The agreement is called the *Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement*. Let me call it just the "Agreement".

The Agreement is the largest and most complex free trade agreement that Canada has ever negotiated. As complex as it is, there are only 3 major factors that we need to consider strategically regarding environmental and animal protection.

1. Canada and its industries desperately want the Agreement in order to diminish their dependence on trade with the US and ensure that a lucrative market, the 27 countries of the EU, remains open.
2. EU environmental and animal protection standards are far superior to Canada's. Among the wealthy nations, Canada has one of the worst records on environmental and animal protection.
3. European politicians and legislatures are far more responsive to the will of their voters (people like you and me) than Canadian politicians are to theirs.

The goal you and I must achieve to protect the environment and animals is to ensure that, if Canada and the EU successfully conclude the Agreement, the EU will only import products produced in accord with EU (not Canadian) environmental and animal protection standards.

Canada, you'll not be surprised to learn, is already pressuring the EU to allow the importation of products that do not meet EU standards, including products that the EU has banned. In fact, that's the main thrust of Canada's negotiating position: reducing or eliminating what are called "technical barriers to trade" (TBT) to unacceptable Canadian products.

You see, Canada and its industries know that they are highly vulnerable to TBT because their environmental and animal protection standards are so bad. That's why Canada is so desperate for trade agreements that permit it to continue its destructive practices while maintaining the export trade upon which it economically depends.

Here's the political reality that you and I confront. Canada resists adopting environmental and animal protection policies, laws, and regulations that are "best practices" unless forced to by its trading partners.

What does it mean here in Canada for animals and the environment if the EU imports products that don't meet EU standards?

The Alberta Tar Sands will continue to spew greenhouse gases and pollute the waterways. Agribusiness will continue to produce products using pesticides, fertilizers, and methods banned in Europe. Cattle, pigs, chickens, turkeys and other "agricultural" animals, from the day they are born to the day they're slaughtered, will continue to suffer appalling cruelty. The fishing industry will continue to wreak havoc on fish species and the marine environment. Forestry and mining will continue to lay waste to the land and waterways.

If, however, the EU under pressure from Canadians like you and me, and its own citizens and animal and environmental protection groups requires that Canada meet EU standards, we will have made unprecedented gains for animals and the environment. Gains that would take us many, many years to achieve in Ottawa or our provincial capitals.

Where the danger lies in this "opportunity" is if Canada succeeds in persuading the EU to accept imports of products produced under Canada's dismal animal and environmental standards. If Canada succeeds, gaining protections for Canada's environment and animals will become ever more difficult. There will be further animal suffering and environmental destruction.

We must seize this opportunity, and we must win. Anything less is unthinkable.

The Canadian government hopes to conclude the Agreement by early 2012. That means we have only a few months to influence the negotiations.

We've been in touch with Members of the European Parliament (MEP) who are strong advocates for animals and the environment, and with EU-based animal welfare groups. Based on their advice about where they need support from us, here's what we plan to do – with your help.

First, everyone's agreed, we need MEPs to hear from you – Canadians who want the environment and animals protected. It's not enough that they just hear from organizations like ours. It's your voice, your concerns, that matter.

There are two ways we plan to make your voice heard in Europe. The first is the "Action Mailer" included with this letter. Please, add your comments to it and mail it as soon as possible.

Second, we'd like to videotape comments from people like you urging the EU negotiators to ensure the Agreement will protect, not harm, Canada's animals and environment. We'll upload the video comments to a website dedicated to this campaign, and on YouTube. We'll make the MEPs, other EU officials, and EU environmental and animal protection groups aware of the videos so they can hear your views and share them with key people who need to hear them, too.

To make the video clips, we're asking people like you to visit the Animal Alliance / Environment Voters offices in Toronto where we'll set up a camera to record your statement. If you can't visit us, you can submit your own video, and we'll include it in the final productions. Please see the enclosed *Video Production Invitation* for more details.

Lastly, David Martin, an MEP from Scotland and a tireless champion of the animals (he's been to the seal hunt), suggested placing ads in two newspapers that reach all MEPs and EU officials: *European Voice* and *The Parliament*. A half page ad in *European Voice* is €5,510 (\$7,680 CDN). A half page in *The Parliament* is €3,700 (\$5,160 CDN).

I'd like to run two advertisements in each publication. But, as importantly, I want the ads to include comments (along with a picture) from people like you – people who not only care about the animals in Canada and our environment, but will fight to protect them. It's your voice and views that will make the difference. It's your voice and views that will rally not only MEPs but also the European people to our cause. Europeans, I assure you, do not want their shops selling products derived from the spoils of animal cruelty and environmental devastation.

Also, placing the ads will give us the opportunity to publish letters-to-the-editor and well-researched articles in *European Voice* and *The Parliament* about the Agreement and how it can harm or protect Canada's animals and environment.

If we're to succeed in this, your support is crucial. The MEPs must hear your views. That will require your time: time to mail in your "Action Flyer" and time to let us put your views on video. Getting your message to the MEPs will require funds too, and for that we need your generosity. More importantly, the animals and environment need your generosity.

It's your generous donation that will help us purchase the advertising space, prepare the ads, produce the videos, establish the website for your video statements, prepare articles for the EU publications, and liaise with like-minded MEPs and EU animal and environmental protection organizations who'll take our cause – your cause – to their legislators and to the people of Europe.

Please, give us your time, give us your financial support, and together we'll give the animals and the environment the protections they need, protections that our federal and provincial governments continue to deny them.



Sincerely, for the animals and the environment,

Liz White
Director

P.S. I am very optimistic that – with your commitment – we can have an Agreement that helps protect our animals and the environment. I say that because just two years ago people like you and groups like ours, both in Canada and Europe, achieved a European seal product ban that reduced the number of seals slaughtered in Canada by over 90%.

We bring to this campaign the same people, expertise, and European political support that were the winning combination that has saved the lives of so many seals.