



29 February 2024

The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
 Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
 Seacole Building
 2 Marsham Street
 London
 SW1P 4DF

And By Email: defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk and stephen.barclay.mp@parliament.uk
 cc: Lord Douglas-Miller OBE, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
contactholmemb@parliament.uk

Dear Secretary of State

OPEN LETTER – The Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023 – Activity Regulations

Following our letter of 2 February, the undersigned 102 organisations and individuals wish to further express our concern regarding the apparent lack of progress by your Department in developing and consulting on the Activity Regulations that are necessary in order to give effect to the will of Parliament expressed by the Animals (Low Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023.

The Act passed into law by Royal Assent on 18 September 2023, more than 5 months ago. At the time, the then Animal Welfare Minister Lord Benyon was quoted as saying:

“The Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act is an important step in our commitment to ensure high animal welfare standards both here in this country and abroad, and I encourage holidaymakers to do their research so they can make informed choices that do not encourage poor animal welfare practices.”

Angela Richardson MP, who tabled the original Bill which became the Act, further stated:

“This legislation is a world first and will work towards greater protection of vulnerable animals in low welfare settings from being exploited as tourist experiences.”

The Bill proceeded through both Houses with cross-party support, without amendment or division at any stage. However, this is an enabling Act, and as such can have no meaningful impact until appropriate Regulations have been passed specifying the activities the advertising and sale of which will be prohibited. Until such Regulations are in place the implementation of the will of Parliament, which so comprehensively approved this landmark legislation without division or amendment throughout its passage, is undermined.

We cannot believe that is the Government’s intention. Yet, our efforts over the past several months to seek information on the government’s plans and timetable for the introduction of Activity Regulations have thus far been deflected, most recently in discussions with your officials on 15 February 2024. Given the current electoral timetable, and the time required to conduct meaningful stakeholder consultation on the Regulations and secure approval of both Houses of Parliament, the opportunity to ensure the Regulations are in place before the General Election is fast receding.

The signatories to this letter have been standing ready to help you progress matters. We have already provided your officials with a list of suggested proscribed activities for consideration, for which we can provide abundant and compelling evidence assembled from numerous specialist and expert sources.

We urge you to establish and communicate, without delay, a clear mechanism and timetable for the development and adoption of Activity Regulations, incorporating appropriate stakeholder consultation, with a view to ensuring that the Regulations will be in place before the end of the current Parliamentary session.

The Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act commands overwhelming public and cross-party support. Effective implementation of these world-leading measures will demonstrate the standing of the UK as a leading voice for animal protection on the international stage and provide an opportunity for nations globally to adopt similar measures for the protection both of vulnerable species and of humans, preventing thousands more people from being catastrophically injured and killed while engaging in unethical and dangerous tourism activities.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Save The Asian Elephants

Action for Elephants UK

Karl Ammann – conservationist, wildlife photographer, author and film producer, TIME Magazine Hero of the Environment

Animal Ahimsa

Animal Aid

Animal Defenders International

Animal Interfaith Alliance

Animal Protection Agency

Animals Asia

John Arnold, Roman Catholic Bishop of Salford

Lord Black of Brentwood FRSA

Bob Blackman CBE MP

Blue Cross of India

Boon Lott's Elephant Sanctuary, Thailand

Born Free

Deidre Brock MP

Catholic Concern for Animals

Cheetah Conservation Fund UK

Christian Vegetarian Association

Christian Vegetarians and Vegans UK

Professor David Clough – Professor in Theology and Applied Sciences, University of Aberdeen

Compassion in World Farming

Compassion Unlimited Plus Action (CUPA)

Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation

Helen Costigan – sister of Andrea Taylor (victim of fatal attack by brutalised tourism elephant)

David Cowdrey FRGS – conservationist

Tracey Crouch CBE MP

Giles Crown – lawyer and ambassador for STAE

Crustacean Compassion

Professor Cathy Dwyer – Director of Jeanne Marchig International Centre for Animal Welfare Education at Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, Edinburgh

Peter Egan – actor and animal welfare campaigner

Egypt Equine Aid

Ethix Digital

Sir Ranulph Fiennes OBE, Bt. – polar explorer and conservationist

FOAL Group

Baroness Foster of Oxton DBE

Four Paws UK

Freedom For Animals

The Gandhi Foundation

Dr Marion Garnett – CEO of Thinking of Animals CIC, organiser of Ealing Animals Fair

Ricky Gervais – comedian, actor, writer, director

Patricia Gibson MP

Lord (Zac) Goldsmith of Richmond Park

Wera Hobhouse MP
Humane Society International UK
Indian Vegetarian Society
Institute of Promotional Marketing
International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)
Stanley Johnson – conservationist and author
Satish Kumar – Indian British former Jain monk, peace pilgrim, founder of Resurgence Trust
League Against Cruel Sports
Professor Phyllis Lee – Emeritus Professor of Psychology, Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Stirling
Rula Lenska – actress and campaigner
Caroline Lucas MP
Dame Joanna Lumley DBE FRGS – actress, TV presenter and producer, activist
Evanna Lynch – film, TV and stage actress (Luna Lovegood in Harry Potter series), animal welfare and vegan activist
Alexander Macmillan, 2nd Earl of Stockton
Clara Mancini – Professor of Animal-Computer Interaction, The Open University
Sunita Mansigani – animal welfare activist
Megan McCubbin – zoologist, conservationist and TV presenter
Stuart McDonald MP
John McNally MP
John Nicolson MP
Wendy Morgan – actress
Naturewatch Foundation
Dr Christina Nellist PhD – theologian, former Visiting Research Fellow at Winchester University
OneKind
Pan-Orthodox Concern for Animals
Partido Animalista (PACMA)
Andrew Penman – journalist
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)
Protect All Wildlife
Quaker Concern for Animals
Ian Redmond OBE – wildlife biologist, Head of Conservation - Ecoflox and Ambassador for UN's Convention on Migratory Species
Andrew Rosindell MP
Carol Royle – actress and animal activist
Dr Richard D Ryder – conservationist, author, animal rights advocate, past Chairman of RSPCA
SARX – Christian Animal Advocacy Charity
Save Elephant Foundation and Elephant Nature Park (Thailand) – founded by Lek Saengduean Chailert, Woman Hero of Global Conservation, holder of Legion d'Honneur of France
Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Jenny Seagrove – actress and owner of the Mane Chance Sanctuary
Virendra Sharma MP
Shellfish Network
Alex Sobel MP
Sri Guru Singh Sabha Southall (world's largest Sikh Gurdwara organisation outside India)
Peter Stevenson OBE – lawyer and animal welfare campaigner
Linda, Countess of Stockton
Touchpoint Group
Professor the Lord Trees FRCVS, FMedSci, HonFRSE
UK Centre for Animal Law (A-LAW)

Dr Madhulal Valliyatte – Asian elephant specialist, conservationist and veterinary consultant
Viva!

Rick Wakeman CBE – musician, composer, activist

Dr Clifford Warwick PGDip(MedSci) PhD CBiol CSci EurProBiol FRSB – biologist and medical scientist
Whale and Dolphin Conservation

Ann Widdecombe DSG – politician, author, TV personality

Wild Animal Welfare Committee

Wild Futures

Wild Welfare

Jay and Katja Wilde – UK’s leading organic vegan farmers, stars of “73 Cows”

World Animal Justice

World Animal Protection

Correspondence to: DuncanMcNair@stae.org