

Mr. Alan Blundell, President
PetSmart Canada
4475 North Service Road
Burlington, ON L7L 4X7

May 3, 2021

Re: A case to end the sale of reptiles and amphibians

Dear Mr. Blundell,

We, the undersigned Canadian and American animal welfare and protection organizations, conservation organizations, veterinarians and scientific experts recognize and appreciate the positive contribution PetSmart and PetSmart Canada has made toward the advancement of dog and cat welfare through the establishment of PetSmart Charities, various public education initiatives, proactive facilitation of animal adoptions and shelter support. Your efforts have helped an extraordinary number of dogs and cats across North America.

Using PetSmart's history of positive actions aimed at enhancing and protecting the welfare of companion animals as a guide, we are asking you to take an additional step to help protect the welfare of tens of thousands of additional animals, specifically the reptiles and amphibians, that have, until recently, received relatively little attention.

Based on an ever-increasing body of science regarding the cognitive, emotional and social capabilities of reptiles and amphibians, the important ecological roles they play in nature, the public health risk they can pose and rapidly changing public sensibilities, we believe that ending their sale would be a positive step for animals, the environment and for PetSmart as well.

While we would like to see a broad-based re-evaluation regarding the keeping of all wild animals as pets, ending the sale of reptiles and amphibians would be an important first step in that process. Doing so would result in:

- Reducing financial and human resource pressures on shelters and rescue centers.
- Protecting tens of thousands of animals annually through the prevention of impulse purchases.
- Alignment with the 90% of your Canadian customers who do not believe that reptiles and amphibians make appropriate pets, including the 81% who would be willing to start shopping elsewhere out of concern for animal welfare.
- Preparedness for a growing political interest to curb the wildlife trade, including the exotic pet trade.
- Showing your customers that PetSmart and PetSmart Canada is progressive, ethical and places the best interest of the animals as a primary consideration, something that should increase customer loyalty and establish PetSmart as the industry leader.

In conclusion, we would like to say that should PetSmart move to protect the welfare and conservation of reptiles and amphibians, that decision would be celebrated by Canadians and Americans from coast to coast, your customers and the entire animal welfare and protection sector. We look forward to supporting you on such an initiative.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Saravanamuttoo, Country Director Canada, World Animal Protection

World Animal Protection is a global animal welfare organization with offices in 14 countries including Canada. We have been working to protect animals for over 55 years. We engage with governments, intergovernmental organizations, corporations, civil society and the general public on a wide range of animal welfare issues related to animals in communities, animals in disasters, animals in farming and animals in the wild.

Liz Quick, Country Director United States, World Animal Protection

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Cathy Liss, President, Animal Welfare Institute

The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) is a nonprofit charitable organization founded in 1951 and dedicated to reducing animal suffering caused by people. AWI engages policymakers, scientists, industry, and the public to achieve better treatment of animals everywhere – in the laboratory, on the farm, in commerce, at home, and in the wild.

Sarah Uhlemann, International Program Director and Senior Attorney, Centre for Biological Diversity

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1.7 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

Rob Laidlaw, Executive Director, Zoocheck Inc

Zoocheck is a Canadian-based international wildlife protection charity established in 1984 to promote and protect the interests and well-being of wild animals. Zoocheck works with a broad range of collaborating partners around the world, endeavors to promote animal protection in specific situations and strives to bring about a new respect for all living things and the world in which they live.

Angela Grimes, CEO, Born Free USA

Born Free USA works to ensure that all wild animals, whether living in captivity or in the wild, are treated with compassion and respect and are able to live their lives according to their needs. We oppose the exploitation of wild animals in captivity. Born Free USA primarily works in the US, Canada, and West and Central Africa though its reach spans the globe. We are pleased to have an office outside of Toronto and more than 10,000 Canadians in our ranks of supporters.

Camille Labchuk, Executive Director, Animal Justice

Animal Justice leads the legal fight for animals in Canada. Our lawyers work to pass strong new animal protection legislation, push for the prosecution of animal abusers, and fight for animals in court.

Liz White, Executive Director, Animal Alliance of Canada

Animal Alliance of Canada's is a non-profit organization committed to the protection of all animals and to the promotion of a harmonious relationship among humans, non-humans and the environment. Since its inception, Animal Alliance has worked to create long term, positive change for animals and the environment.

Amy Morris, Executive Director, Vancouver Humane Society

The Vancouver Humane Society is a registered charity dedicated to the humane treatment of animals. Since 1984, we have been encouraging individuals, organizations, and governments to take responsibility for the welfare and rights of domestic animals and wildlife influenced by human activities.

Dr. Kerry Kriger, Ecologist and Founder & Executive Director, Save the Frogs

Save the Frogs is the world's most effective amphibian conservation organization. Our mission is to protect amphibian populations and to promote a society that respects and appreciates nature and wildlife. We work in California, across the USA, and around the world to prevent the extinction of amphibians, and to create a better planet for humans and wildlife.

Ericka Ceballos, CEO and Founder, CATCA Environmental and Wildlife Society / International Aid For Animals Foundation

CEWS is an NGO with over 33 years of experience, working in animal conservation at an international level. Since 13 years ago, we have been formally investigating and researching the illegal e-commerce of protected wildlife worldwide. CEWS often engage with governments and enforcement authorities. We mostly work on CITES issues. All of our e-commerce reports are at the INTERPOL database.

Tove Reece, Executive Director, Voice for Animals

Voice for Animals is a registered, non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of animals. Our focus is on local and province wide issues but our motto could be "think globally, act locally". We believe that we must lend our voices to speak out for animals who are abused and exploited because, whether domesticated or wild, they have virtually no protection under human law. Ultimately, we believe that the disregard for the suffering of other species hurts us all.

Kathy Powelson, Founder & Executive Director, Paws for Hope

Paws for Hope Animal Foundation is passionate about animals and their care and protection. We envision communities that embrace pets as family, ensuring they are loved, free from harm, and where no pet is left behind. Our mission is to shift companion animal welfare culture in B.C. by creating strategies that address the underlying causes of harm.

Mabyn Armstrong, Administrator, Turtles Kingston

Turtles Kingston is an informal group of concerned citizens responding to the plight of Turtles found in the Kingston area all of whom are identified as 'Species at Risk'. They offer a wide variety of programs at no cost to the public they are a philanthropic organization involved in many Turtle advocacy and conservation issues.

Veterinarians

David Waltner-Toews, DVM, PhD. Veterinary epidemiologist, zoonotic diseases specialist

Dr. Waltner-Toews is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Guelph and founding president, Veterinarians without Borders-Canada. He is the author of more than 20 books, most recently "On Pandemics: Deadly Diseases from Bubonic Plague to Coronavirus" (ECW, 2020). Dr. Waltner-Toews is best known for his initiatives to integrate human, animal, and ecosystem health in research, practice and teaching

Katie Clow, DVM, PhD Assistant Professor, Ontario Veterinary College

Dr. Clow's research and teaching focus on applying a One Health approach to complex issues. She advocates for integrated and transdisciplinary approaches for issues at the intersection of human, animal and environmental health.

Dr. Adrian Walton, DVM, Owner and Lead Veterinarian, Dewdney Animal Hospital

Dr. Walton is mainly a small animal practitioner in Maple Ridge British Columbia but also works with a range of exotics and is the only licensed Reptile Rescue Facility in British Columbia.

Dr. Alix Wilson, DVM, Medical Director, Center for Avian & Exotic Medicine

Dr. Alix Wilson graduated from veterinary school in 2005 and works exclusively with exotic animals. She is the Medical Director at the Center for Avian & Exotic Medicine in New York City where medical needs are provided to small mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians. Dr. Wilson is a consultant for the Animal Care Centers of NYC, and the Wild Bird Fund, and is adjunct professor at LaGuardia Community College's Veterinary Technology Program.

Dr. Mary Richardson, DVM

Dr. Richardson graduated from Ontario Veterinary College and founded the Cat Hospital of Kitchener-Waterloo. Previous animal welfare related positions include: Board member for the Centre for the Study of Animal Welfare at the University of Guelph, Chair of the Animal Care Review Board for the Solicitor General, Chair of the Animal Welfare Committee for the Ontario Veterinary Association. She is currently also active as an animal welfare consultant.

Dr. Ken Langelier, OBC DVM

Dr. Langelier is an exotics/wildlife veterinarian on Vancouver Island and has been instrumental in many animal welfare campaigns. Dr. Langelier was recognized for his work by becoming the recipient of the Order of British Columbia, Veterinarian of the Year by the BC SPCA, Veterinarian of the Year by the College of Veterinarians of BC, and numerous other achievements. Dr. Langelier is currently working on animal welfare issues such as exotic pet regulations.

Anthony A Pilny, DVM, DABVP (Avian Certified)

Dr. Pilny is a practicing veterinarian who has devoted the last 19 years to treating birds and exotic pets exclusively. Because of this experience Dr. Pilny places a large focus on welfare considerations for a population of pets that often suffer greatly when kept in captivity. In his experience, reptiles are often the most poorly treated pets (even by well meaning owners) and he advocates for regulations to restrict their sale to benefit the animals and the environment.

Jonas Watson, BA, DVM

Dr. Watson graduated from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in 2006 and has a strong interest in exotic animal medicine. He is the immediate past president of the Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association, the Chair of the Winnipeg Humane Society's Board of Directors and a consultant for numerous animal welfare organizations. In 2019, Dr. Watson received the World Veterinary Association's Global Animal Welfare Award in recognition of his work.

Other scientific experts

Dr. Chris Shepherd, Wildlife Trade Expert

Chris has a PhD from Oxford Brookes University and is an active member of many IUCN SSC specialist groups, and has published numerous papers on wildlife trade, and on solutions to mitigate trade as a threat.

Jan Hajek MD, FRCPC, DTMH, Infectious Diseases Specialist

Dr. Hajek is an Infectious Diseases Specialist based at Vancouver General Hospital and a Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of British Columbia. He has worked with the World Health Organization (WHO) and with Doctors without Borders (MSF) in responding to international outbreaks of infectious diseases.

Marc Bekoff Ph.D., Professor emeritus, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Colorado, Boulder

Dr. Bekoff is winner of the Exemplar Award from the Animal Behavior Society and former Guggenheim Fellow, he has published more than 1000 essays and 31 books on topics including ethology, behavioral ecology, animal protection, and compassionate conservation. He also is co-chair of the ethics committee of the Jane Goodall Institute.

Jonathan Balcombe, PhD, biologist and best-selling author

Jonathan Balcombe, Former Department Chair for Animal Studies with the Humane Society University, and Director of Animal Sentience with The Humane Society Institute for Science and Policy is a biologist dedicated to improving the human-animal relationship through his books, lectures, media interviews, teaching, and other means. His books include Super Fly (forthcoming May 2021), What a Fish Knows, Second Nature, and Pleasurable Kingdom.

Amy Fitzgerald, Professor of Criminology, Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Criminology, University of Windsor

Amy has been studying the (ab)use of animals for approximately twenty years. Her research focuses of the intersecting harms perpetrated against non-human animals, the environment, and people. She has authored several academic articles and books.

John Sorenson, Professor, Department of Sociology, Brock University

Professor Sorenson has an HBA and MA from the University of Alberta and a PhD from York University. He currently teaches Critical Animal Studies and gives courses on nonhuman animals and human society, racism, and corporate globalization. His most recent book is Dog's Best Friend?: Rethinking Canid Human Relations (co-edited with Atsuko Matsuoka), McGill-Queens University Press.

Dr. Rosemary Collard, Assistant Professor, Geography Department, Simon Fraser University

Rosemary conducts research and teaches in political ecology and economic geography, with a focus on understanding the political economic drivers of extinction and defaunation. She recently completed a multispecies ethnography of the global exotic pet trade, published as a book, Animal Traffic (Duke University Press, 2020).

CC:

J.K. Symancyk, President and Chief Executive Officer, PetSmart
Janette Artea, Senior Public Relations Manager, Golin
Agnes Mann, Director Marketing, PetSmart Canada
BC Partners