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February 5, 2014

Mr. Charles Brown
Eastern Regional Director
Wildlife Management Services Team
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services
USDA/APHIS/AC
4700 River Road, Unit 84
Riverdale, MD 20737

Mr. Brown,

I am reaching out on behalf of Westchester4Geese, an organization dedicated to the welfare and protection of geese and a subsidiary of Animal Defenders of Westchester (ADOW). This organization, based in New York's 16th District, has expressed serious concerns regarding the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) culling of animals in New York's Westchester County.

I understand that it is the USDA's responsibility to stabilize animal populations in order to prevent overpopulation, particularly in urban and residential areas. However, I am sure you agree that we also have an obligation to protect animals from indignity, pain and suffering. As such, I believe that the welfare of innocent creatures should be a high priority, and the excessive killing of animals needs to stop.

As a member of the House Animal Protection Caucus, I am deeply concerned about the welfare of animals, such as the Canadian goose. The unnecessary killing of animals must be avoided. Failing to do so would be both cruel and avoidable. However, as stated above, I understand the need to avoid overpopulation in certain areas. While I feel nonlethal methods should be used whenever possible, should it be absolutely essential for the USDA to perform a cull in order to manage a population in a given area, I believe the residents of that area should be notified in the most expedient manner possible.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to consider this issue. Should you have any outstanding questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to Catherine Barnao, who handles animal welfare issues in my Washington, D.C. office. She can be reached by phone at (202) 225-2464, or by email at catherine.barnao@mail.house.gov should you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

ELIOT L. ENGEL
MEMBER OF CONGRESS