Date:

MP:
Address:

Dear MP

As one of your constituents, I am writing to let you know that ***my vote for you in the next election depends solely on whether you support Bill C-246*** (the "Modernizing Animal Protections Act"), a private member's bill introduced by Member of Parliament Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches-East York) and backed by several other Members of Parliament and Ministers of Justice, both past and present. What Bill C-246 aims to do is **ban the importation of shark fins and dog and cat fur into Canada, strengthen the animal cruelty sections in the Criminal Code, and update the Criminal Code definition of bestiality to incorporate any sexual act between a human and an animal.** A June 9, 2016 decision of the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the current legal view of bestiality as requiring penetration. Justices indicated, however, that although they did not necessarily agree with this definition, it is Parliament's responsibility to change the law. Bill C-246 would do that.

Despite the positive implications of Bill C-246 for animal protection, people have expressed concerns about the bill's potential impact on Canadians' legal rights to hunt, fish, farm, and conduct medical research. ***MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith has made it clear that Bill C-246 is about animal abuse and not legitimate animal use. Language in the bill explicitly permits lawful activities such as hunting, fishing, farming, and research.*** Animal law experts, including Professor Peter Sankoff, conclude that the fears about the bill's unintended consequences are generally unfounded. Nevertheless, MP Erskine-Smith is supportive of having these concerns addressed at the committee stage.

The animal cruelty provisions in the Criminal Code have not been substantively updated since 1892 and 92% of Canadians surveyed want to see our animal cruelty legislation improved. Abused animals live under heartbreaking conditions: they languish in puppy mills or in backyards on chains; they are physically and psychologically abused in a multitude of ways; they are subjected to the wrath of people who use them as leverage to control their children or spouses*; and they are neglected and discarded like yesterday's news when the novelty of having a new puppy or kitten subsides. **The proposed Criminal Code amendments in Bill C-246 would close legal loopholes that allow people who neglect or abuse animals to get away with their crimes.** As an elected official in the privileged position of being able to vote on Bill C-246 on behalf of your constituents, ***I respectfully request that you vote in favour of the bill.*** At the very least, please lend your support to the bill until it gets to the committee stage where it can be scrutinized closely and any necessary revisions can be made to ensure that legitimate animal use will be safeguarded.
**There is a well-documented link between animal cruelty and other crimes, including crimes of violence against humans, so Bill C-246 will make animals and people safer.*

Unequivocally, my vote in the next election hinges upon whether or not you vote in favour of Bill C-246. Thank you for your consideration, and please let me know whether you intend to support Bill C-246 when it is put to a vote in the House of Commons.

Sincerely,

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

Phone number: ( ) _____ **E-mail address:** _____

Copy: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister
The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould, Minister of Justice and Attorney General