

June 4, 2021 – BRIEF SUBMISSION FROM DANA SMITHERS – NORTH VANCOUVER BC

TO: AGRICULTURE & AGRI-FOOD COMMITTEE

RE: STOP BILL C- 205 – Ag Gag Style Bill Moving Forward in Parliament

I am writing as an animal advocate in protest to an **Act to Amend the Health of Animals Act**, which was introduced on February 18, 2020 by Conservative MP John Barlow. It would amend the *Health of Animals Act* by adding a Section 9.1 to the **Act**.

For me and many others who care about the treatment of farm animals, I see no reason for this new Act and it makes me question:

“What does this industry have to hide that they want to implement such excessive fines up to \$250,000 or up to two years of imprisonment. An organization could be fined as much as \$500,000?”.

This Act has been put forward indicating that animal advocates are ‘**biosecurity risks**’ when they enter the premises. This is simply not true.

This is what is **TRUE**:

1. Disease outbreaks occur regularly on farms, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency monitors these carefully and investigates them when they occur. ***Contamination is usually caused by farm staff working on multiple farms; sharing needles and equipment; contact with wild animals; or in the case of mad cow disease, by feeding ground up dead animals back to live animals.***

For example, recent **COVID-19 outbreaks at mink farms** in British Columbia and around the world were **caused by infected workers, who then passed the virus on to minks.**

2. Provinces have exclusive jurisdiction to enact trespass laws. Many provinces have already amended their farm trespass laws through ag gag-style legislation, including Alberta, Ontario, and PEI. In fact, PEI recently passed legislation that is nearly identical to Bill C-205.
3. By targeting trespassers, Bill C-205 is a federal bill that intrudes on provincial jurisdiction. It could be challenged in court and struck down as an unconstitutional interference with the federal-provincial division of powers in Canada.

Recommendation:

What would make sense is for the Federal Government to **regulate and monitor animal welfare conditions on farms.** Currently the federal government only regulates transport and slaughter, and these poor defenseless animals never even see the light of day. The public is growing weary of hearing about cruelty within the farming communities. We know that the farming industry basically makes its own rules with recommendations – not requirements.

In conclusion I would like to pose this question to you and others looking at passing this bill:

**“Do you want to be part of something that makes changes
for the betterment of the animals’ welfare and
to improve the conditions for their care?”**

I hope you will consider my appeal to stop bill C-205 from ever being passed into law.

Kind Regards

Dana J Smithers
North Vancouver BC