

Brief on Bill C-205, an Act to Amend the Health of Animals Act

To: The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

From: Susan Simpson

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As a private citizen, I am submitting to you my written opinion, with respect to Federal Bill C-205, An Act to Amend the Health of Animals Act. I find this bill to be very disturbing, along with similar types of provincial bills that have passed in Ontario, Alberta, Prince Edward Island and, just recently, Manitoba. I believe that this bill is an attempt by the meat, dairy, egg and fur industries to keep hidden the care and conditions of farmed animals, who are largely kept behind closed doors and out of public view.

There have been undercover videos taken of conditions on farms involving various animals such as pigs, chickens and turkeys in the meat industry, chickens in the egg industry, cows and goats in the dairy industry, and fur bearing animals on farms that have exposed the horrific conditions under which many animals are kept.

There are witnesses who have seen first hand how farmed animals are cruelly treated, whether on farms or during transportation to slaughter.

In my opinion, Bill C-205 is a proposed law being made in support of industries that want to hide abusive practices, within their industries, from the public. The concern stated by the animal agricultural industry with wanting this law passed is because of biosecurity issues. This bill is supposedly addressing this issue by attempting to stop anyone from trespassing by imposing excessively severe punishments in order to prevent contamination to animals. What this bill does not address is the biosecurity protocols that need to be in place for farm owners and operators, slaughterhouse owners and operators and their employees. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has documented disease outbreaks that have occurred on farms and their causes. None have been attributable to animal advocates' activities.

I believe that animal advocates who have gathered on farms have done so, from a concern for animals, with what they have seen. They are trying to bring attention to the plight of animals on farms and in transport. If there was government oversight, by having specific penalties and enforcement in place in order to reduce, and hopefully eliminate abuse and neglect of farmed animals, it would convey transparency, and would help the public have more trust in the animal agricultural industry. The National Farm Animal Care Council Codes of Practice indicates requirements and recommendations for the care of various species of animals, yet these are just guidelines and are not enforceable laws.

Unfortunately, society needs whistleblowers, brave individuals who will expose wrongdoings by those who commit abusive acts, and shed light on horrific conditions. I believe that the real purpose of Bill C-205 is not for biosecurity purposes for the health of animals and humans, but to deter individuals from showing the public and government officials some of the abusive acts in the farming industry.

I found it very disturbing that Ontario brought in legislation under Bill 156, The Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020. Instead of covering farmed animals under Ontario's Bill 136, Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019 it brought in trespassing legislation for the same reasons as this Federal Bill C-205. Provincial governments should have legislation in place for protecting farm animals and not leaving it up to industry. Legislation at the provincial and federal levels, dealing with

trespassing on farms, are additional layers of trespassing laws that appear to hide the true intention of these laws.

We need to have better animal welfare laws. Government regulations, inspections and enforcement of animal protection laws are very much needed at the provincial and federal levels not added layers of trespassing laws that are supposedly protecting the biosecurity of animals.