



NAIA Trust for the Protection of Animals, Animal Owners and Animal Enterprises

*Educating the Public about the Critical Difference between Animal Welfare and Animal Rights:
Supporting Animal Welfare Using Common Sense, Science and Reason.*

April 1, 2006

Honorable Tom Petri
2462 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Petri:

The National Animal Interest Alliance and the NAIA Trust support HR 4239, the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act introduced by you in November 2005.

The National Animal Interest Alliance is an educational coalition of animal owners and public, private and commercial organizations dedicated to animal welfare, responsible animal ownership, and maintaining the rights of owners to responsibly keep and enjoy pets and livestock. NAIA and NAIA Trust back reasonable laws that define and restrict the unlawful behavior of groups and individuals who terrorize legitimate animal enterprises and threaten, frighten, bully, and otherwise interfere with those who work in and with animal industries.

From our beginning in 1991, the National Animal Interest Alliance has worked for laws to protect animal enterprises from animal rights extremism. To this end, NAIA participated in the campaign that culminated in 1992 passage of the Animal Enterprise Protection Act. In the intervening years, we have endorsed several necessary amendments to strengthen that law and do so again by supporting HR 4239.

Although the AEPA was reinforced in 2002, enemies of animal industries found a loophole: along with continuing their assaults on companies and individuals that raise and use animals, they significantly increased their use of violent tactics against third parties who do business with animal enterprises. As witnesses testified before your committee in October 2005, these reprehensible attacks have resulted in personal traumas, financial loss, and property damage against innocent people who are pursuing lawful careers and lifestyles.

We believe HR 4239 is necessary because it

- Prohibits the intentional damaging of property of a person or entity connected to an animal enterprise;
- Prohibits veiled threats to individuals and their families because of their relationship with an animal enterprise;

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- Prohibits conspiracies or attempts to commit such damage or threats;
- Increases penalties for intentional economic disruption or damage, physical injury to a person, and placing a person in reasonable fear of death or bodily injury;
- Broadens the definition of animal enterprise to include a commercial enterprise that uses or sells animals or animal products, including animal shelters, breeders, pet stores, circuses, rodeos, and furriers; and
- Defines “economic disruption,” as losses or increased costs resulting from threats, acts of violence, property damage, trespass, harassment, or intimidation taken against a person or entity because of a relationship with an animal enterprise.

The recent terrorism conviction of the group Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty and six of its members for attacks against Huntingdon Life Sciences highlights the need to protect those who deal with animal enterprises in any capacity. SHAC and its member thugs were found guilty of direct action against HLS, but they and other militant groups and individuals have also been implicated in crimes against employees of securities companies, the New York Stock Exchange, pharmaceutical firms, and other businesses that do work with or for Huntingdon.

NAIA and NAIA Trust respect lawful protest and individual expression, but when a spokesman for the Animal Liberation Front brazenly states that murder is acceptable in the pursuit of the animal rights agenda and a Texas philosophy professor publicly declares that property destruction is acceptable as a method of stopping legal animal use, we believe it is time to increase federal restrictions of behavior that the FBI has labeled “one of our highest domestic terrorism priorities.”

Sincerely,

Patti L. Strand, trustee