



August 18, 2015

**Representative Rod Hamilton
443 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155**

VIA EMAIL: rep.rod.hamilton@house.mn

Dear Representative Rod Hamilton:

I can only imagine that it has been a busy week for you since the release of Last Chance for Animals' four month survey of your company's pig farm in Rock County, MN. As the investigation into criminal conduct on Christensen Farms continues we were shocked to learn that you were the sponsor of Minnesota House Bill 1369 that would have impeded the exposure of this grisly documentation of animal abuse. In fact, Minnesota HB 1369, as proposed in 2011, would have criminalized the act of gaining employment with your farm, the documentation of the abuse and neglect, as well as the public release of this information. If your bill had passed, people who documented abuse on your farm would face greater penalties than anyone who actually abused the animals.

It's obvious that such unconstitutional legislation would do nothing but protect private interest and profits, all at the expense of animal welfare and our constitutional rights. As federal judge, B. Lynn Winmill so eloquently composed when striking down Idaho's "ag-gag" law:

The remedy for misleading speech, or speech we do not like, is more speech, not enforced silence: "The remedy for speech that is false is speech that is true....The response to the unreasoned is the rational; to the uninformed, the enlightened; to the straightout lie, the simple truth."... "Society has the right and civic duty to engage in open, dynamic, rational discourse. These ends are not well served when the government seeks to orchestrate public discussion through content-based mandates."

If LCA had never visited the Christensen Farms facility none of this misconduct would ever have been brought to light and animal cruelty as prohibited by Minnesota's anti-

cruelty law would have gone unreported. Christensen Farms' managers would have maintained their protocols of neglect, which allowed pigs like 934303 to wither away for seven weeks until her eventual death, and sow 401855, who languished for ten weeks in the company "sick pen", only to become emaciated.

Last Chance for Animals is confident in the integrity of the findings of its investigation and has provided all of the relevant information to the Rock County Sheriff's department. After the case was released interested local citizens have made us aware of a large amount of pigs in the farm's dumpsters and their reports to us are of concern. I hope that Christensen Farms alerted Sheriff Verbrugge about its killing of sows since you became aware of his investigation, which began on August 7, and that your company has documented the condition of each sow killed with photo evidence so that the true conditions of this facility are made available to authorities. Disposing a large amount of evidence during an ongoing criminal investigation may appear to Minnesotans as a means to conceal proof of wrongdoing.

We share the sentiment of your CEO Glen Stolt, who says, "We strongly support legislation that protects the health and welfare of our animals." Instead of trying to pass legislation that would criminalize the exposure of animal abuse, we ask that you work with us to sponsor legislation in Minnesota that would make animal cruelty a felony for ALL animals including the 175,000 mother pigs that are confined on your farms and the four million pigs that you sell for slaughter each year. Minnesota currently does not allow for anything other than misdemeanor charges for farm animals, even in the case of torture and severe abuse as carried out by your employees. You must agree this is a gap in Minnesota law that is in dire need of correction. LCA is currently drafting model legislation, and in the interest of animal welfare that your company seeks to be a leader in, we will be awaiting both corporate support from Christensen Farms and your presentation of this amendment in the next legislative session.

Sincerely,



Adam Wilson
Director of Investigations
Last Chance for Animals

E: investigations@lcanimal.org