



March 2017

Memorandum of Support for New York State Bill S1559 (Avella) Ending the Practice of Force-Feeding Birds

Compassion Over Killing (COK), a national animal protection organization, submits this memorandum in support of S1559, a bill to prohibit the cruel practice of force-feeding birds for the purpose of fattening their livers. New York is one of the only states in the US where this practice continues, and hidden-camera footage¹ taken by a COK investigator as well as footage filmed by others has routinely exposed the cruel and barbaric nature of force-feeding birds.

Force-feeding is how foie gras is produced. Ducks are force fed abnormally large quantities of food, causing their livers to become diseased and swell up to ten times the normal size, inducing a condition known as “hepatic lipidosis” or fatty liver disease, and often causing additional related debilitating and painful conditions in these animals.

This practice is considered so cruel, it’s already been banned in California as well as more than a dozen nations, including the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, Israel, and Turkey. Experts from the US and around the world have concluded that force-feeding is inhumane and should be prohibited due to welfare concerns.

Dr. Tammy Hodge, a veterinarian in East Greenbush, NY has stated, “I consider the production of foie gras to be inhumane as it deliberately harms the duck...”²

Currently, Ferndale, NY is home to two of the nation’s largest foie gras factory farms. COK’s investigative footage reveals the sheer barbarity of this practice and documents what can only be described as a torture chamber for birds: these animals are grabbed by their necks or wings and a metal pipe is shoved down their throats in order to forcefully pump large quantities of food into their stomachs. This process itself causes the birds to suffer immensely, let alone the pain and discomfort caused by fatty liver disease. The cruel force-feeding process is so detrimental to the birds’ health that many die even before being sent to slaughter.

While force-feeding is standard practice in the foie gras industry, it is by no means natural for these animals and such violence and cruelty is simply unnecessary.

The New York Legislature should stand by its state motto, Excelsior, by moving the state ever upward and forward by passing this bill banning the cruel, barbaric and senseless practice of force-feeding animals.

¹ *Compassion Over Killing: Hudson Valley Foie Gras Factory Farm Investigation*, <http://cok.net/inv/hudson-valley/>

² *Humane Society of the US: Scientists and Experts on Force-Feeding for Foie Gras Production and Duck and Goose Welfare* <http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/farm/hsus-scientists-and-experts-on-force-feeding-for-foie-gras-production-and-duck-and-goose-welfare.pdf>