



TO: Members of the New York City Council

FROM: Gene Baur, President and cofounder of Farm Sanctuary

DATE: June 20, 2019

RE: Support for Intro 1378 to ban the sale of foie gras

I am writing on behalf of Farm Sanctuary and our more than 30,000 supporters in New York City to express our strong support for Intro 1378. This basic humane measure will prevent the intolerable suffering of ducks and geese by banning the sale of foie gras from force-fed birds. This inhumane process causes the birds' livers to expand ten times their normal size, displacing their internal organs and making it difficult to breathe.

Farm Sanctuary has worked to prevent the inhumane treatment of farm animals since our founding in 1986. We helped pass the nation's first laws to restrict cruelty to farm animals, including California's law banning the sale of foie gras, and we operate sanctuaries in New York and California where we have cared for thousands of rescued farm animals over the years.

Ducks who have come to Farm Sanctuary after being rescued from foie gras farms are among the sickest animals we have cared for in over thirty years. These lethargic and suffering birds have required intensive care, taking weeks to recover from extreme illness caused by force-feeding, which produces abnormally large and dysfunctional livers. The force-feeding process would be fatal if allowed to continue, so the birds on foie gras farms are slaughtered when they are very young, while those who make it to Farm Sanctuary suffer from life-long health problems.

A necropsy report on the gross pathology of birds who died from force-feeding found, "The lungs were edematous and hemorrhagic. The livers showed extreme hepatomegaly and light color." The necropsy further describes, "Severe steatosis of the liver, acute bronchopneumonia patchy and consistent with gross pathology impression of an aspiration pneumonia. Severe pulmonary congestion. Autolysis of multiple organs." Intentionally making birds sick by force-feeding them for a luxury product exemplifies wanton animal abuse, and it's outside the bounds of acceptable conduct in our society.

Veterinarians, businesses, and humane organizations support Intro 1378, and there also is widespread public support, which was evidenced by the many citizens who testified in favor of the bill at the June 19<sup>th</sup> City Council Committee on Health hearing. A Mason Dixon poll from February 2019 found that 81% of New York City voters support a ban on selling foie gras. New Yorkers are humane, and they want their city's laws and policies to reflect their ethical principles.

Foie gras has no place in a society that values compassion, and New York City can be a leader in bringing about a more humane world by enacting Intro 1378 and banning the sale of this cruel product.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Gene Baur  
Farm Sanctuary President & Co-founder



*To protect farm animals from cruelty, inspire change in the way society views and treats farm animals, and promote compassionate vegan living.*

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