

March 3, 2025

Senator Ron Latz  
Chair, Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee  
3105 Minnesota Senate Building  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

RE: Support for the Office of Animal Protection (SF 1163/ HF1816)

Dear Chair Latz and members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

I am a Licensed Peace Officer with the State of Minnesota in the City of Coon Rapids and am an investigator who specializes in Animal Cruelty (MN STAT 343.21) cases and general welfare. I know the work, dedication, and coordination that goes into investigating, charging, and prosecuting these complex and important cases.

Animal cruelty cases are unique, complex, and multi-faceted crimes. While investigating these crimes I have had to learn about breeding husbandry, communicable diseases, cock fighting, complex mental health disorders such as hoarding, and many other topics too long to list. For most of my cases I have had to assemble teams made up of mental health professionals, social workers, veterinarians, city officials, Humane Society agents, animal rescue workers, and fellow officers. The time, effort, and availability of these professionals is too large of a burden for many local police departments to take on.

While investigating these crimes I have been witness to the extent the harm animal cruelty has caused. The animals are not the only ones who suffer. The children who are forced to watch their parents abuse/kill their pets, the neighbors attacked by animals who have been hoarded in the neighboring home, the innocent adults who purchased a kitten from a breeder who was so sick it caused the entire family to fall ill, and the woman terrified to leave her apartment for fear her roommate will kill her service animal. These crimes are not committed in solitude.

The formation of an Office of Animal Protection will help alleviate or completely remove the hurdles local police departments face while investigating these crimes. I have been dedicated to serving the Coon Rapids community through the prosecution of these crimes but I am aware I am unable to provide the full enforcement necessary and there are crimes going unnoticed. With the Office of Animal Protection, I would have the tools, connections, and support to serve my community better and improve the overall public safety.

Thank you for your time,

Officer Danielle Forsman  
Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving Officer, Investigations Division