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Officials aware of nearly 100 trapped pet deaths since 2003

Ministry has not made significant changes to policies to protect pets

VANCOUVER – Family pets are being killed in traps across British Columbia every year, but the government continues to ignore pleas for policy changes, a national wildlife protection group says.

The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals (The Fur-Bearers | www.TheFurBearers.com) learned through briefing notes for the Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resources obtained via Freedom of Information Act requests that policymakers are aware that “since 2003 there have been over 85 reports of pets being caught in traps (approximately 8 pets per year).” The note, dated August 12, 2013, also states the actual number is believed to be much higher.

“Municipalities, recreational land users, and taxpayers across British Columbia have asked for changes that can prevent the clear danger presented to family pets by legal traps,” says Adrian Nelson, Director of Communication for The Fur-Bearers. “But since 2011, when these requests were formally launched by communities such as Sechelt, Surrey, Nanaimo, and White Rock through by-laws and letters, the Ministry has evaded and redirected any measurable change.”

Municipalities have attempted to outright prohibit the use of body-gripping traps in their communities, but the Ministry has blocked them by stating provincial consent is required for such a by-law, then never providing said consent. The Fur-Bearers have in the past requested required signage of traps in area, identification tags (privately held by the Ministry) on traps, and greater setbacks for traps in multiuse areas including trails.

“Every day more pets are at risk of excruciating pain and potential death in legal leg-hold or body-gripping traps, and the Minister has done nothing to protect the families who elected him. Economically, ethically, and ecologically, the priorities should be clear: there are approximately 70,000 trappers across Canada compared to over 100,000 dog owners in Vancouver alone, all of whom contribute to the multi-billion dollar pet industry.”

The Ministry has refused meetings with The Fur-Bearers since 2011 and has not given permission to any municipalities to control trapping activities; there is no financial or legal recourse for family’s whose pets are injured or killed in traps.

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