

**The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer, Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA**

4 March 2026

Dear Prime Minister

OPEN LETTER

**Government action is urgently needed to give effect to the  
Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act**

We write on behalf of members and supporters of the ‘Low-Welfare Act Coalition’\*, a collaboration of animal protection organisations and individuals supportive of the laudable aims of the Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023. The Act confers powers on the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to introduce activity regulations that prohibit the sale and advertising in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, of activities abroad which involve low standards of welfare for animals.

Since the Act received Royal Assent in September 2023, we have provided successive Secretaries of State with detailed evidence of low welfare activities abroad, compiled by animal welfare experts and advocates from across the globe, that we strongly believe merit inclusion in activity regulations. We have also engaged directly with the DEFRA Minister with responsibility for animal welfare and her officials. However, to date no progress has been made, as a result of which the Act, which consistently enjoys overwhelming public support, remains unimplemented.

While we appreciate the demands on parliamentary time, the Act was passed in September 2023 with strong cross-parliamentary support, including from Labour shadow Ministers and Parliamentarians. The long delay in its implementation means that England, Wales and Northern Ireland remain complicit in animal suffering, which undermines Parliament’s intention and fails to deliver on public opinion.

DEFRA’s Animal Welfare Strategy for England, published in December 2025, states that your government is committed to “a generational step change in animal welfare”, and that it will “explore with industry and NGOs legislative and non-legislative options to stop the advertising in the UK of low animal welfare activities abroad”. However, years of effort by animal welfare advocates to engage with the tourism industry have failed to generate meaningful and consistent non-legislative solutions that fulfil this ambition.

The Animals (Low Welfare Activities Abroad) Act provides the legislative option that your government must now grasp.

We stand ready to assist your government in developing and tabling the activity regulations required to deliver the intention of the Act. By doing so, you will help address the widespread animal suffering associated with international tourism, reduce the risk of human injuries and deaths associated with inappropriate and cruel interactions with wild animals, and meet parliamentary and public expectations to end the sale and promotion of cruel practices involving animals abroad that would not be deemed acceptable here at home.

If you are truly committed to delivering a generational step change in animal welfare, giving effect to existing legislation aimed at reducing animal suffering is key.

We therefore urge you to commit to giving effect to the Act, by instructing your Secretary of State for Environment, in consultation with animal welfare experts and taking into full account the detailed evidence of low welfare activities provided by the Low Welfare Act coalition, to develop and table a draft Statutory Instrument containing the long-awaited activity regulations, without further delay.

We await your timely response with anticipation, and stand ready to assist.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Mark Jones, Head of Policy, Born Free Foundation

Ruth Tanner, UK Country Director, World Animal Protection

Duncan McNair, CEO, Save the Asian Elephants

Margaux Dodds, Executive Director, Marine Connection

Lorraine Platt, Co-Founder, Conservative Animal Welfare Association

Elisa Allen, Vice President of Programmes and Operations, PETA UK

Chris Butler-Stroud, CEO, Whale and Dolphin Conservation

For and on behalf of the Low-Welfare Act Coalition\*

\*The Low-Welfare Act Coalition combines some 150 animal protection organisations and experts in conservation, animal welfare, academia, law and the world of celebrity in the UK and across the globe. It is committed to holding our Government to its promises to implement the landmark Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023, passed with overwhelming public and Parliamentary support over two years ago.