

On behalf of:  
Animal Defenders International  
Born Free Foundation  
Captive Animals Protection Society  
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

4 February 2008

The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs  
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs  
Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3JR

Dear Mr Benn,

You are no doubt aware that the report of the chairman of the Circus Working Group (CWG) published in October 2007 has caused widespread concern amongst animal protection groups, MPs, the media and members of the public.

You will find enclosed the responses to this report published by Animal Defenders International, the Born Free Foundation, the Captive Animals' Protection Society and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Each of these is highly critical of the methodology and process employed for the CWG and the (perhaps inevitable) inconclusive findings.

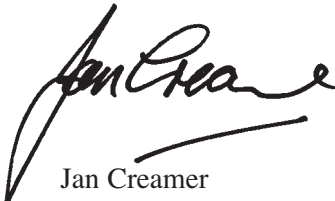
As early as September 4th 2006, the animal protection groups participating in the CWG (ADI, BFF, RSPCA) wrote to Minister Bradshaw outlining our concerns that the process was unworkable, and offering a solution.

The recent debate held in Westminster Hall on the 23rd January 2008 highlighted the need for a wider and more open inquiry on the protection of animals in circuses. We believe that a public and transparent political process must now be initiated in order to move on from the deadlock left by the CWG.

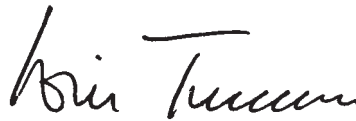
We believe that it remains possible to fulfil the Government's parliamentary and public commitments on this issue, and that we can be of assistance. We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you the options now available for a practical, workable and proportionate solution on the use of animals in travelling circuses.

We look forward to hearing from you soon and hope to meet with you in the near future,

Yours sincerely



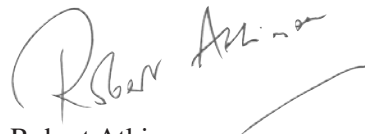
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Chief Executive  
**Animal Defenders International**



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CEO  
**Born Free Foundation**



Garry Sheen  
**Captive Animals Protection Society**



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**RSPCA**