

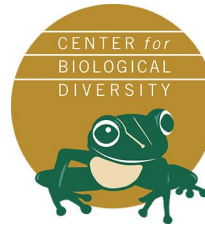


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**ANIMAL  
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**CPC** Colleen Patrick-Goudreau





April 20, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom, California State Governor  
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, California Surgeon General  
California Health and Human Services  
1600 Ninth Street, Room 460  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom and Dr. Burke Harris,

We urge you to end the commercial wildlife<sup>1</sup> trade and sale for human consumption in California, including a ban on the import of nonnative birds, reptiles and amphibians. We also earnestly ask you to establish—with all the legal power vested in you—the rigorous enforcement of such bans and existing laws against the illegal trade of wild animals.

With public health now teetering on the threat of the next pandemic, swift action is needed.

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<sup>1</sup>For this document, the term ‘wildlife’ means wild animals in the wild or bred in captivity.

A connection to wildlife markets and related trafficking has emerged as the cause of the novel coronavirus nCoV-2019 pandemic currently plaguing our world. The earliest cases of COVID-19 in December, 2019 were with people who had been around, or handled wild animals sold in a market as food. Scientists have proven that wild animals carry diseases that are transmittable to humans, and they are tracking this new coronavirus' passport from animals to humans.

Zoonotic viruses—animal viruses capable of being transmitted to humans—have also been found in birds, turtles, frogs, pigs, cattle, and others, including California animals. Zoonoses, responsible for three out of every four infectious diseases, have caused millions of deaths globally, and the rate of outbreaks is growing exponentially. Numerous studies have exposed that zoonotic diseases leap to humans through wildlife hunting, trade and trafficking, transporting and containing highly stressed animals plucked from their habitats, unsanitary practices of commingling species on the chopping board, and delivering diseased (often living) animals in paper and plastic bags.

The practices described above are found in meat markets called “live food markets” in large cities in California, among other states.

Congress<sup>2</sup>—in a bipartisan letter from 66 members—has called on The World Health Organization to close all wild animal markets, amid a froth of other similar outcries around the globe, including the World Conservation Society letter<sup>3</sup> to all world governments, a 241-organization letter<sup>4</sup> to the World Health Organization calling for a permanent, global ban on all live wildlife markets, and a long list of health experts, organizations and news journals.

Dr. Anthony Fauci,<sup>5</sup> the foremost U.S authority on COVID-19, has argued that the viral outbreak is a “direct result of [the wild animal markets],” stating that “we have so many diseases that emanate out of that unusual human-animal interface, that we [should] just shut it down.” Days later, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, a nonprofit of 12,000 doctors, filed a Petition for Rulemaking<sup>6</sup> with U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams, urging him to close all live animal markets in the United States.

Steven Osofsky, Professor of Wildlife Health and Health Policy at Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine, states, “At a time when the entire world is increasingly bearing the costs of the global wildlife trade, where billions of dollars of public health emergency costs and the depletion of the world's wildlife are literally the trade's primary byproducts, it is time to shut down these markets forever... It's what's right for public health, for biodiversity conservation, for the global economy, and for socioecological stability.”

The California Fish and Game Commission adopted policy in 2010<sup>7</sup> to ban the import of nonnative turtles and frogs—which are procured and sold in our live food markets—yet it was never codified as regulation. The Department of Fish and Wildlife tracks a running list of zoonoses,<sup>8</sup> but continues to do business as usual. Wildlife trafficking, as the primary cause of zoonotic diseases—now a seismic global health issue—must end. California can no longer continue to ignore it.

The latest figures from Johns Hopkins University show that COVID-19 is responsible for 2.4 million cases and 165,000 deaths worldwide, including nearly 1,200 in California. Prohibitions and absolute strict enforcement against illegal wildlife trade and wildlife markets will help to prevent future zoonotic pandemics.

We are grateful for your leadership in California and the nation during this crisis. We urge you now to put the prevention of future pandemics at the top of your priority list, even as you, your team and our state, city and county officials and industry professionals struggle in real time to save lives.

**Surgeon General Dr. Burke Harris and Governor Newsom, we ask you now to take swift action to:**

1. permanently ban the commercial wildlife trade and sale for human consumption through live animal markets and other means in California;
2. cease all importation permits of nonnative birds, amphibians and reptiles;
3. ensure punishment of wildlife crimes is commensurate to the dimensions of the global threat they pose; and
4. require the Department of Wildlife, through guidance from humane education organizations, to establish an educational program to inform the public of the risks of wildlife trade to human health, ecosystem preservation, biodiversity and the global economy.

**Again, we urge you to end the commercial wildlife trade and sale for human consumption through live animal markets and other means. Please call on us to assist you in any way to make this happen. Together, we will save lives.**

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<sup>2</sup>Bipartisan Letter from Sixty-Six Members of Congress, April 9, 2020.

[https://www.booker.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/04.08.20\\_Booker\\_Graham\\_Quigley\\_McCaul\\_Final%20sBlock.pdf](https://www.booker.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/04.08.20_Booker_Graham_Quigley_McCaul_Final%20sBlock.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>World Conservation Society Policy, February 18, 2020.

[https://c532f75abb9c1c021b8c-e46e473f8adb72cf2a8ea564b4e6a76.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/2020/04/01/8294efiuzg\\_COVID\\_19\\_Summary\\_of\\_WCS\\_Policies\\_and\\_Messaging\\_March29.2.pdf](https://c532f75abb9c1c021b8c-e46e473f8adb72cf2a8ea564b4e6a76.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/2020/04/01/8294efiuzg_COVID_19_Summary_of_WCS_Policies_and_Messaging_March29.2.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>World Wildlife Federation Policy for Vietnam Prime Minister Phuc, March 18, 2020.

<https://www.hsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Open-letter-WHO-Wildlife-Trade-and-Covid-19-FINAL-.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>Fox News Interview of Dr. Anthony Fauci, April 3, 2020.

<https://video.foxnews.com/v/6146846185001#sp=show-clips>

<sup>6</sup>Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine Petition for Rulemaking to U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams

<https://www.pcrm.org/news/news-releases/doctors-urge-surgeon-general-shut-down-us-live-animal-markets>

<sup>7</sup>California Fish and Game Commission Meeting Summary, April 7-8, 2010.

<http://pawpac.org/markets/fgc-april2010.pdf#page=11>

<sup>8</sup>Zoonotic Diseases, Wildlife Investigations Lab, California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Laboratories/Wildlife-Investigations/Monitoring/Zoonotic-Diseases>

Sincerely,

/s/ René Rowland

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René Rowland, Chair  
PawPAC

/s/ Madeline Bernstein

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Madeline Bernstein, President  
spcaLA

/s/ Pei Feng Su

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Pei Feng Su, Founder  
ACTAsia

/s/ Eric Mills

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Eric Mills, Coordinator  
Action for Animals

/s/ Susan Tellem

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Susan Tellem, Executive Director  
American Tortoise Rescue

/s/ Paula Burton

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Paula Burton, U.S. Director  
Animals Asia

/s/ Craig Downer

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Craig Downer, Wildlife Ecologist  
President, Andean Tapir Fund

/s/ Stephen Wells

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Stephen Wells, Executive Director  
Animal Legal Defense Fund

/s/ Jen Riley

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Jen Riley, Chair  
Animal Rights National Conference

/s/ Anita Krajnc

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Anita Krajnc, Co-founder  
Animal Save Movement

/s/ Kierán Suckling

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Kierán Suckling, Executive Director  
The Center for Biological Diversity

/s/ Will Tuttle

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Dr. Will Tuttle, Co-founder  
Circle of Compassion

/s/ Colleen Patrick-Goudreau

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Colleen Patrick-Goudreau, Author  
Animal Advocate

/s/ Karen Dawn

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Karen Dawn, Founder/President  
DawnWatch

/s/ Michael Colbruno

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Michael Colbruno, Co-founder and Chair  
East Bay Animal PAC

/s/ Leda Huta

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Leda Huta, Executive Director  
Endangered Species Coalition

/s/ Michael Cintas

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Michael D. Cintas, Olympic Coach  
Owner, Equestrian Centers Intl.

/s/ Alex Hershafit

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Alex Hershafit, Co-founder and President  
Farm Animal Rights Movement

/s/ Gene Baur

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Gene Baur, President and Co-Founder  
Farm Sanctuary

/s/ Megan Moon

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Megan Moon, President and Founder  
Humane Education Coalition

/s/ David Phillips

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David Phillips, Executive Director  
International Marine Mammal Project

/s/ Rande Levine

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Rande Levine, President and Founder  
Karma Rescue Inc.

/s/ Louie Psihoyos

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Louie Psihoyos, Executive Director  
Oceanic Preservation Society

/s/ Bob LeRoy

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Bob LeRoy, MS EdM RDN  
Founder, President and Co-Coordinator  
Plant-based Prevention Of Disease (P-POD)  
Conference

/s/ Camilla Fox

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Camilla Fox, Founder & Executive Director  
Project Coyote

/s/ Tim Gorski

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Tim Gorski, Director  
Rattle the Cage Productions

/s/ Kerry Kriger

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Kerry Kriger, Ph.D., Executive Director  
SAVE THE FROGS!

/s/ Paul Watson

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Captain Paul Watson, Founder  
Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

/s/ Todd Steiner

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Todd Steiner, Executive Director  
Turtle Island Restoration Network

/s/ Karen Davis

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Karen Davis, PhD, President  
United Poultry Concerns

/s/ Linda Middlesworth

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Linda Middlesworth, Founder  
Vegan Mentor, Vegan Health Coach  
Food for Life Nutrition Instructor, PCRM

/s/ Debbie Dahmer

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Debbie Dahmer, Producer  
Animal Advocates Radio "Voices Carry For  
Animals" on Blog Talk Radio

/s/ Anna Marie Reams

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Anna Marie Reams, Director  
Wildlife Care of SoCal

/s/ Ben Williamson

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Ben Williamson, US Programs Director  
World Animal Protection

/s/ Alex Pacheco

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Alex Pacheco, President  
600 Million Stray Dogs Need You