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January 30, 2025

**John Rustad, MLA**  
Leader of the Opposition,  
Legislative Assembly of British Columbia  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC

Dear Mr. Rustad,

**Re: Urgent Support Needed to Halt Ostrich Cull and Advocate for a 30-Day Review**

I am writing to you to urge your leadership in advocating for a 30-day review of the CFIA's planned cull of 400 ostriches in Edgewood, BC, scheduled for February 1, 2025. This is a critical moment to stand up against unchecked government overreach and a lack of due process that threatens the rights of farmers and citizens alike.

**Key Issues Requiring Your Action:**

**1. Call for a 30-Day Review and Legislative Reform:**

I believe this case requires a 30-day review to allow independent experts to assess the scientific, genetic, and public health implications of this decision. *A copy of this letter has been sent to you for your reference.*

- I am asking you to publicly support this review and speak out against this unchecked government action.
- Demand transparency from both CFIA and BC's governing authorities about how and why this exemption was revoked.
- Advocate for legislative reforms to emergency laws, both provincial and Federal, so that government agencies cannot wield absolute power without proper checks and balances.

**2. CFIA's Exemption Reversal and Order to Cull:**

On January 2, 2025, the CFIA granted an exemption to the farm, citing the genetic uniqueness of the ostrich flock. Just eight days later, this exemption was suddenly revoked without explanation, and a culling order was issued.

- The testing process was completely inadequate and there were no autopsies, no assessment of the health of the herd, and no proper diagnostic review.
- The herd is currently healthy, yet the government is pressing ahead with mass slaughter.
- Unknowingly handing over their research data to CIFA most likely led to the exemption reversal. Their research may preclude the need for vaccines.

### **3. Genetic and Scientific Significance of the Herd Undermined by Government Action:**

The ostrich herd has demonstrated resilience to H5N1 avian flu (if it was indeed the flu and not another virus), exhibiting herd immunity.

- On January 3, 2025, the farm owners provided the government with scientific data proving the natural immunity of these ostriches, showing the presence of antibodies related to COVID-19.
- The herd's resilience to H5N1, evidenced by natural antibodies, offers a breakthrough in non-genetically altered vaccine development. Instead of capitalizing on this potential, the government's decision to cull threatens to destroy critical data and hinder advancements in innovative disease prevention methods.

### **4. CFIA's Orders have led to the Mass Slaughter of 8.6 Million Birds in BC:**

- According to the CFIA's most recent avian flu bulletin, there are 59 poultry farms in British Columbia where avian flu outbreaks have been reported, leading to the culling of 8.6 million commercial birds.
- Despite this massive loss, the virus is not considered a food safety concern, and there is no evidence that eating cooked poultry or eggs transmits the virus to humans.

### **5. Extreme and Inhumane Conditions Imposed on Ostriches and Farm Owners:**

- CFIA has ordered the farm owners to kill all 400 ostriches themselves and bury them 10 birds per grave on their property.
- If they refuse, the government will send third parties to kill the herd.
- The owners are not allowed to have a veterinarian assess the herd, conduct any independent testing, or seek outside scientific verification.
- If they attempt to bring in a veterinarian or conduct their own testing, they face a \$250,000 fine and potential jail time.

### **6. Concerns Over Humane Treatment and SPCA Involvement:**

- Reports suggest that shooting the ostriches is being considered as a culling method. This cannot be considered humane or acceptable—the scale of such an action is horrific.
- It is a clear violation of BC's Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, raising further concerns about the reckless and unaccountable nature of the decision-making process.
- A letter has been sent to the SPCA urging them to intervene and prevent the inhumane killing of these animals.

### **Call to Action:**

- Support the call for a 30-day review and push for an immediate stay of execution for these ostriches.
- Publicly challenge the CFIA's failure to follow proper scientific methods and its unjustified reversal of the exemption.
- Fight for legislative reforms to ensure that emergency laws cannot be used to strip citizens and farmers of their rights.

John, this is an opportunity for you to lead the fight against government overreach and champion the survival of these 400 Ostriches through rigorous scientific evaluation. Support and actively pursue the call for a 30-day reprieve to allow proper testing and verification of the herd's health and genetic resilience. Be mindful that the

chemical industry's influence on government decisions, especially when profits are at stake, cannot be underestimated. This action is not only about saving a unique herd but also about advocating for real legislative change that respects centuries of genetic evolution which has contributed to their survival. Your leadership can ensure that science and transparency guide governmental decisions, preventing reckless culls based on incomplete data and possible external pressures.

I will follow up with your office directly to explore collaborative efforts to halt this cull and ensure CFIA enacts the 30-day stay of execution. Please communicate your position on this critical issue to your fellow MLAs, issue a press release, and let British Columbians know where you stand. Urge them to take a stand on this vital matter.

Sincerely,

*Your Signature*

[Your Full Name]

[Your Affiliation, if applicable]