



P.O. Box 150 Watkins Glen, NY 14891 607-583-2225  
P.O. Box 1065 Orland, CA 95963 530-865-4617

January 16, 2007

The Honorable Christine Quinn  
Speaker of the City Council  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

By U.S. Mail and Fax: 212-788-7207

Dear Speaker Quinn

I am writing on behalf of Farm Sanctuary's more than 150,000 supporters in response to your letter opposing legislation to prevent the sale of foie gras in New York City. I disagree with your statement that "banning foie gras would most likely have serious adverse implications on the restaurant and food industries". Foie gras is not a staple food, nor is it a product that most restaurants sell. It is an expensive appetizer served in a few high-end restaurants, and no chef worth his or her salt depends on foie gras to create gustatory delights.

In 2005, Zogby polled 705 likely voters across the state of New York and found that 51% never heard of foie gras and 40% had never eaten it. In addition, 78% said they support a ban on foie gras.

Foie gras (French for "fatty liver") is produced by force feeding ducks and geese through a pipe shoved down their throats. This causes their livers to expand ten times their normal size, resulting in a liver disease called "hepatic lipidosis". This diseased liver is sold as foie gras.

It is well known that ducks and geese force fed to make foie gras suffer. The Scientific Veterinary Committee of the European Commission, which is comprised of experts from around Europe, conducted a thorough review into the welfare of birds used for foie gras. They published an 88 page report that concluded, "The Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare concludes that force-feeding, as currently practiced, is detrimental to the welfare of the birds". Similarly, the Israeli Supreme Court deliberated carefully on this issue and released their verdict in 2003, declaring foie gras production to be cruel and in violation of the country's humane laws. Writing the majority opinion, Justice T. Strasberg-Cohen explained that force feeding caused "a degenerative disease" and described the practice as "violent and harmful".

Your letter says that the City Council is charged with passing legislation that improves the lives of New Yorkers. I submit that prohibiting animal abuse, and ending the cruelty of foie gras improves the lives of New Yorkers. We all benefit from policies that prevent violence, and promote compassion. Cruelty to animals often indicates a broader callousness and lack of empathy, and it is well known that people who abuse animals are also more likely to abuse other people.

A growing number of New York City residents, along with citizens across the U.S., are becoming concerned about how their food is produced. And, many are upset to see foie gras, a product of egregious animal cruelty, on restaurant menus.

As the Speaker of the City Council, I encourage you to carefully investigate this matter and to consider adopting a humane position that is consistent with the values of most New York residents. Please don't hesitate to let me know if we can provide you with any additional information, including photos, videos, expert testimony and scientific evidence and reports.

I look forward to your timely response. Thank you very much for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gene Baur', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gene Baur, President  
Farm Sanctuary, Inc.