

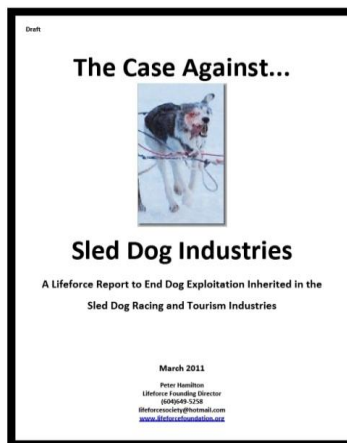
NEWS RELEASE

RE: TASK FORCE FAILS TO END SLED DOG EXPLOITATION

It was last April 21st and April 23rd when the horrific mass slaughter of 100 sled dogs took place. There are many events planned in hope of justice for the victims. Unfortunately, it appears that many of the Facebook groups and others are attempting to profit financially. It is also evident that the sled dog industries infiltrated and manipulated those who want a ban. Many of these self-proclaimed Whistler 100 “protectors” do not want a ban and fail to understand why the inherent dog abuses cannot be eliminated through regulations and guidelines.

Lifeforce, a Vancouver-based ecology and animal rights organization, was invited to participate in the BC Sled Dog Industry Task Force review. Lifeforce submitted our Draft report entitled, “The Case Against Sled Dog Industries” See <http://lifeforcefoundation.org/newsitem.php?id=135>

As stated in the released BC Sled Dog Task Force Report:



- *The Lifeforce report “The Case Against Dog Sled Industries” detailed a range of issues associated with sled dog use in the racing and tourism industries. This included examples of alleged abuse and neglect in BC, Canada and the US. The physical and mental health impacts on the dogs as well as existing regulatory and voluntary standards of care were also discussed. The philosophy of animal rights and laws was presented to consider moral principles which are not addressed by animal welfare positions. The report recommended that provincial legislation, such as stopping the 24/7 chaining of all dogs, would help reduce the suffering of a multitude of dogs. However, it is the Lifeforce position that a ban on sled dog businesses for profit is necessary based in part on the probable lack of compliance and enforcement of any guidelines or legislation.*

Lifeforce responses to the Task Force Report:

1. Recommendations for improvements in Provincials laws and recommending changes in the Federal Criminal Code are a step forward. Lifeforce has been urging animal rights laws for over 20 years. However, if implemented, enforcement is still remains an issue since many offences are out of public view on private property. For example, there may only be annual inspections for sled dog businesses on “Crown Land”. Lifeforce had recommended that other groups that investigate and respond to cruelty complaints be supported through proceeds from fines.

2. Developing any “Codes of practice” will not stop the inherent, historical abuses in the racing and tour industries. The mistreatment of these “working dogs” include the sled dog puppy mills, “culling”, debarking, 24/7 isolated chaining and more. Who will set standards, and police it? Standards/Codes of Conduct are not enforceable under law and lack penalties such as fines and jail time.

3. Taxpayers’ monies must not be used to fund the inhumane sled dog industries through workshops to form “a sled dog industry association” and promoting sled dog businesses through BC Tourism. Other similar self-policing industry groups, such as Mush With P.R.I.D.E., supports racing, debarking, chaining, “culling” and other abusive industry practices. **Contact your MLA if you live in BC.**

4. Some of the recommendations attempt to legitimize the historically abusive sled dog industries. From the beginning of the Task Force the head, Terry Lake, adamantly supported and defended the dog sled industries. The history of the sled dog industries reveals that the reported inhumane slaughter of dogs in Whistler, BC was not an aberration. It is inherent in the sled dog racing and tourism industries. The Task Force heard that there have been many, many cruelty investigations and charges laid in Canada.

5. There is public support for a ban. The Whistler Question newspaper poll found that 42.1% supported a ban and 18.6% wanted more regulations. The BCSPCA's claim that a ban would force the industry to go "underground" is absurd because most abuses are presently out of public view and it would be illegal!

Sled Dog Abuses Continue

The same company that slaughtered the 100 dogs, Outdoor Adventures, has been trying to dispose of 35 more dogs. Snowy Owl Dog Tours has listed 27 dogs on their site. Several cautions are on the latter site about the issues with sled dogs' aggression etc.. It's not "rehoming" since the majority of these "working dogs" do not have homes. They are chained 24/7 being subjected to physical and psychological abuses.

Was the Task Force a snow job? The Sled Dog Industry is funded by the BC Government through promotions by BC Tourism. Former Premier Gordon Campbell called for the Task Force to make sure that the Whistler 2010 Olympic embarrassment never happens again. It sounds as if this meant no more harm to BC Tourism NOT the continue dog victims!

"From the beginning the government biases were obvious," stated Peter Hamilton, Lifeforce Director, "Terry Lake's defence of the sled dog industries tainted the democratic process to protect animals not vested interests."

"People can choose to race themselves under grueling circumstances and stop the exploitation of dogs. Racers and dog tour businesses must put on their skis, ride snowmobiles or run all terrain vehicles. People can enjoy Super Natural BC without animal exploitation. "

"A compassionate society should not regulate cruelty or promote guidelines. As stated in our report any such attempts will not eliminate the abuses in the racing and tourism industries. In addition, any enforcement is not possible in many cases. The plight of these dogs must end! Lifeforce and many others will continue to fight for animal rights laws, adequate enforcement to protect animals, boycotts and bans. The sled dog industries must be banned."

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