

August 5, 2004

4 pages via e-mail and fax: 202.861.8378

Kathryn Fuller, President
World Wildlife Fund-U.S.
1250 24th St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20037-1124


Dear Ms. Fuller:

I am in receipt of an e-mail from JoAnna Moskal in your Member Relations department to a PETA member who contacted the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) regarding its stance on animal testing. As you know, I was previously engaged in a dialogue on various animal-testing issues with your Vice President, Richard Mott. Although this dialogue has since ended, you should know that PETA does appreciate the WWF's support in calling for increased government funding for non-animal test methods, particularly in the area of endocrine disruption testing in the U.S.

My reason for writing today is for clarification regarding a reference that is made Ms. Moskal's letter (and stated in a similar fashion in your European "DETOX" campaign factsheet, "Animal Testing and REACH"). Both documents refer to the WWF being opposed to "outdated or unnecessary animal testing." This seems to imply that the WWF considers certain animal-based toxicity tests in use today as falling into one or both of these categories. Is this correct? If so, I would be very interested to learn which specific animal-based test methods and/or toxicity endpoints the WWF regards as outdated, unnecessary, or otherwise unsupportable. Needless to say, each example you can provide will represent welcome additional common ground between our organizations.

I appreciate your attention to this query, and look forward to receiving your response. I can be reached at TroyS@peta.org or via fax at 519.570.4640.

Sincerely,



Troy Seidle
Science Policy Advisor

Attachments

cc: Richard Mott
Michael Warhurst



PETA

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL
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ORGANIZATION DEDICATED
TO PROTECTING
THE RIGHTS OF ALL ANIMALS

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Moskal, JoAnna" <JoAnna.Moskal@WWFUS.ORG> wrote:
Subject: RE: Dear President of WWF
Date: Wed, 4 Aug 2004 13:24:43 -0400
From: "Moskal, JoAnna"

Dear _____ :

Kathryn Fuller has asked me to respond to your recent email to World Wildlife Fund regarding the Endocrine Disrupter Screening Program (EDSP).

Toxic chemicals are crippling wildlife populations all over the world. In 1970 in Lake Ontario, a researcher found a herring gull colony where 80 percent of the chicks had died before they hatched. The chicks had grotesque deformities including club feet, missing eyes and twisted bills. Many were shriveled, wasted, and appeared unable to metabolize energy stored in their egg yolks. In 1988 near Sweden, the largest seal die off in history resulted in the deaths of almost 18,000 seals, including many spontaneously aborted seal pups. A similar event caused 1100 sick and dead dolphins to wash up on the shores of Italy and Morocco in the early 1990s. In the seemingly pristine arctic environment on an island near Greenland, researchers have witnessed polar bear birthrates to be one-half what they expected.

World Wildlife Fund is working to prevent these catastrophes from happening again. Whether a toxic chemical affects development of gull chicks or suppresses the immune systems of seals and dolphins, it poses a serious threat to wildlife around the world. Of the more than 100 synthetic chemicals that have been identified as hormone disrupters, the majority are "persistent" and resist natural decay. These long-lived chemicals will be a continuing hazard to wildlife for years, decades, and sometimes centuries. The Endocrine Disrupter Screening Program seeks to identify these toxic chemicals before they become prolific and harm wildlife.

It is important to note that wildlife face serious and wide-ranging threats from exposure to toxic chemicals we use every day. WWF is committed to reducing the harm from what amounts to an uncontrolled experiment that is being conducted, not in laboratories, but in the environment itself. Consequently, we have urged governments to identify, control, and phase out the hazardous substances responsible for widespread damage to wildlife and humans.

While there is much data on the risk chemicals pose of causing cancer, little information is available about chemical effects on endocrine systems. Endocrine systems regulate hormones and are crucial in controlling development. As described above, even a small disruption can cause disastrous consequences such as compromised immune systems, feminization, and metabolic abnormalities. Unfortunately, identifying the dangerous substances that cause these problems will require some focused chemical testing. WWF believes this testing should rely on non-animal methods wherever these are available and opposes any outdated or unnecessary animal testing. We have also called for a dramatic increase in government funding to speed development of non-animal tests so that unnecessary use of animals in chemical testing can be ended entirely.

In our official comments to EPA, WWF has been very clear on our position:

"To avoid unnecessary use of laboratory animals in endocrine disruptor screening and testing, WWF urges EPA to rely to the fullest extent possible on validated non-animal screens and tests. In vitro screens and tests, in addition to being more humane, promise to be quicker and less expensive. Where such tests are not yet available, WWF believes EPA ought to invest in their development as a matter of priority, and that Congress should increase funding to speed this important transition." (EPA Public Docket No. OPPT-2002-0066, April 1, 2003)

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Stopping the EDSP, as some animal welfare groups have advocated, will only provide aid and comfort to chemical manufacturers who tell us their products are safe without ever having to prove it. WWF is dedicated to protecting life on Earth and saving wildlife around the world from exposure to toxic chemicals in the environment. We have called on governments in the United States and Europe to identify and ban the chemicals responsible and urged them to do so without putting other animals needlessly in harm's way.

Thank you for the opportunity to set the record straight. We hope you will agree that WWF's efforts are aimed at protecting all creatures, in the greatest numbers, from the gravest harms.

Sincerely,

JoAnna S. Moskal
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