

February 3, 2014

Ken Mitchell, Executive Director
Staten Island Zoo
614 Broadway
Staten Island, NY 10310

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

I'm writing on behalf of PETA's more than three million members and supporters worldwide about the Staten Island Zoo's participation in the odd and certainly inhumane annual event in New York that uses and abuses a groundhog who supposedly predicts winter weather in America. Even though we know that animal behavior—especially something as simple as one individual's decision to enter or exit a den under duress—could never predict a nation's climate, this peculiar ritual involving a groundhog (or, actually, multiple groundhogs), named Chuck, continues. **We ask that you end the zoo's association with this event, stop loaning out groundhogs for this daft publicity stunt, and use your influence to respect wildlife by helping put an end to this gimmick.**

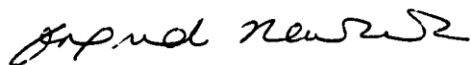
As you must know, groundhogs are typically shy animals and will surely feel fear and stress when they are out of their burrows and facing a crowd. Yet Chuck and other animals used for Groundhog Day events are trotted out to face human handling and hundreds of noisy people, flashing lights, and cameras—and deprived of their natural hibernation periods. Further, yesterday's event resulted in Chuck being dropped during a photo op, likely causing additional stress and possibly injuries.

The annual event doesn't have to end, though: New York could easily switch to an amusing robotic animal for Groundhog Day celebrations, which would be a win-win situation for the organizer, would attract new and curious tourists and techies, and the real groundhogs would finally get a good winter's sleep.

Please will you let me know that you will end the zoo's participation in this event?

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,



Ingrid E. Newkirk
President