



October 24, 2017

Wendi Safran
Assistant District Attorney
Middlesex County District Attorney's Office

Via e-mail: wendi.safran@state.ma.us

Dear Ms. Safran,

We hope you're well. I'm writing on behalf of PETA, the world's largest animal rights organization with more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide, including nearly 94,000 Massachusetts residents, to thank you for your work on the case against Louise Coleman, the former director of a self-professed animal "rescue" doing business as "Greyhound Friends, Inc." (GFI), which is currently under a state-issued cease-and-desist order—the third such order issued to it since 2010.¹ A news article reported that "[t]here has been a long history of overcrowding, long-stay dogs, kennels being too small, kennel stress and inappropriate dogs being offered for adoption at" Greyhound Friends and that "documents show the organization has a track record of disobeying the [population] limits **going back to 1988**" [*emphasis added*].²

The cruel and dangerous conditions described at GFI in [state inspection reports](#) and [news reports](#) are typical at hoarder "rescue" facilities. According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, **of the estimated 6,000 new hoarding cases reported in the U.S. each year, "rescue" groups make up one-quarter.**³ The National District Attorneys Association [offers the following warning](#):

There is an entire industry of "rescues" that warehouse animals in horrific conditions; however, the catalyst for warehousing is not a mental health affliction, but pure, old-fashioned, greed. . . . The "exploiter hoarder" will acquire animals to fulfill their own needs and are indifferent to the harm they are causing the animals. They are controlling, manipulative and will evade the law. They are true narcissists and **when charged with animal cruelty, will start letter writing campaigns, smear campaigns and allege reprisal.**

¹John Hilliard, "Greyhound Friends Founder Ordered to Stay Away From Kennel," 29 Mar. 2017, BostonGlobe.com <<https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/west/2017/03/29/greyhound-friends-founder-ordered-stay-away-from-kennel/m5YnjCseS7erBKAzcYE1OJ/story.html>>.

²Jonathan Phelps, "State Blasts Lack of Enforcement at Greyhound Friends," 26 Mar. 2017, MetroWestDailyNews.com <<http://www.metrowestdailynews.com/news/20170326/state-blasts-lack-of-enforcement-at-greyhound-friends>>.

³Sue Manning, "When Animal Rescuers Become Animal Hoarders," 26 Jan. 2011, Associated Press <http://www.nbcnews.com/id/38978396/ns/health-pet_health/t/when-animal-rescuers-become-animal-hoarders/#.VV9at_IVikp>.

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These hoarders will often start up new "rescues" during the pendency of the case [*emphasis added*].⁴

In light of the allegations against Coleman and what we know about "rescue" hoarders, **we strongly support prosecution in this case**. Experts agree that a ban on contact with or ownership of animals—as well as psychiatric treatment and routine inspections to ensure compliance—are critical sentencing requirements in cases like this one. These vital preventive measures can go a long way toward saving animal lives as well as taxpayer dollars. If Coleman is convicted, only carefully considered sentencing and probationary conditions can preclude the otherwise inevitable recurrence of these crimes. Plea agreements can also serve this essential purpose.

Please let me know if PETA can be of assistance in this or other animal-related cases. I can be reached at 443-320-1277 or TeresaC@peta.org.

Thank you for your hard work for the citizens of Middlesex County.

Sincerely yours,



Teresa Chagrin
Animal Care and Control Specialist
Cruelty Investigations Department

Attachment

"Animal Hoarders: Behavior, Consequences, and Appropriate Official Response," PETA, Information for Prosecutors, Judges, and Law Enforcement Agents (<http://www.mediapeta.com/peta/PDF/hoardingsingle72.pdf>)

⁴Sandra Sylvester and Curtis W. Baranyk, "When Animal Hoarding Is Warehousing for Profit, Part 1," National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, 2011
<<http://www.ndaa.org/pdf/TalesJustice-vol1-no2.pdf>>.