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To:

Excmo Sr. D. Fernando Clavijo Batlle

Excmo. Sr. D. Alejandro Narvay Quintero Castañeda

Cc:

D. Juan Armiche Ramos Quintero

Dña. María Isabel Artime García

Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Virginijus Sinkevicius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

5th October 2023

Dear Excmo. Sr. D. Fernando Clavijo Batlle and Excmo. Sr. D. Alejandro Narvay Quintero Castañeda,

We, the undersigned groups, are writing to ask the Government of the Canary Islands to reject the current plans by Nueva Pescanova to establish an octopus farm in the port of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

Since 2019, Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) and many national and international organisations have expressed their serious concerns to the Canary Islands and Spanish governments and the EU Commission about this developing industry. Over the last three years, there has been increasing opposition to the development of octopus farming by [scientists](#), [environmental NGOs](#), and the [public](#), and the issue has attracted significant international media attention.

Several online petitions have launched opposing Nueva Pescanova's plans to farm octopuses in Spain, achieving [millions](#) of signatures. NGOs from different sectors around the world have joined the movement against octopus farming. [Protests](#) have been organised at national and international level, asking the Spanish and Canary Islands' governments to stop Nueva Pescanova's plans. Citizens, NGOs, and well-known influencers have taken to social media to express their opposition to the project.

These public concerns have not gone unnoticed. At the policy level, several [MEPs](#) have expressed their opposition to the farm, bringing the issue to the European Parliament and the European Commission. The Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC), made up of industry, science, and NGO experts on aquaculture, formed to advise the European Commission and Member States, have created a specific working group on octopus farming given the problems and concerns that this new industry presents. Outside the EU, [Washington State](#) has proposed a Bill banning octopus farming, and [the UK](#) has legally recognised cephalopods as sentient beings. Hawaiian authorities have closed the [Kanaloa octopus farm](#), and in [Canada](#), a governmental petition was proposed to ban octopus farming. Moreover, the well-recognised seafood certification labelling schemes [RSPCA](#) and [Friend of the Sea](#) (FOS) have already announced that they will not certify farmed octopus products.

It is important to stress that octopuses are wild animals profoundly unsuited to farming, and there are serious sustainability and animal welfare problems associated with this industry's development. We refer to the CIWF report [Octopus Factory Farming – A Recipe for Disaster](#), in which the scientific evidence relating to octopuses and the consequences of farming them was reviewed. Additionally, we refer to [Uncovering the Horrific Reality of Octopus Farming](#), a report by CIWF and Eurogroup for Animals highlighting the problematic issues with the farm plans that Nueva Pescanova submitted to the General Directorate of Fishing and the Government of the Canary Islands. A report by scientists at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) called [Review of the Evidence of Sentience in Cephalopod Molluscs and Decapod Crustaceans](#), also concluded that higher welfare farming is impossible for octopuses.

As naturally solitary animals, octopuses would not fare well in the group conditions and high stocking densities typical of farming systems. These intelligent animals could not express their natural behaviours, confined in barren underwater tanks. Most importantly, there is currently no scientifically validated method for the humane slaughter of octopuses. According to reliable sources, Nueva Pescanova is planning to kill octopuses by submerging them in tanks containing water with ice, a method scientifically recognised for resulting in a painful, stressful, and slow death.

Octopus farming is also unsustainable. Octopuses are carnivorous animals, and therefore, rearing these animals requires that they be fed animal protein. Thus, octopus farming would require capturing large quantities of fish or other marine organisms to feed the farmed octopuses, exacerbating overfishing of oceans.

In light of the overwhelming international public opposition to the octopus farm opening in the Canary Islands, as well as the growing political concerns over this project, your subsequent actions are of great importance. Public opinion as well as the scientific community should not be ignored, nor should the significant risks allowing a factory farm to be built would pose to the environment, your communities, local biodiversity and tourist trade. We, therefore, ask that you reject the planning application to develop the farm on the grounds of animal cruelty, environmental risks, and the negative impact it may have on your community.

We hope you will give our request due consideration and are open to discussing the points mentioned in our letter. In May 2023, the previous General Director of Fisheries in the Government of the Canary Islands, D. Carmelo Dorta Morales, agreed to meet with us in-person. We would welcome such an opportunity to discuss this in more detail and remain at your disposal if you have any questions or need further information.

Yours sincerely,

on behalf of Compassion in World Farming and the signatories listed below.



Dr Elena Lara
Research Manager – Fish, Compassion in World Farming

Signatories

- Animal Law Italia
- Animals Aotearoa
- Animal Legal Defense Fund
- Aquatic Life Institute
- Barcelona Animal Save
- Born Free Foundation
- Catholic Concern for Animals
- Compassion in World Farming
- Crustacean Compassion
- Direct Action Everywhere
- Ecologistas en Acción
- Empatía
- Equalia
- Essere Animali
- Ethical Seafood Research
- Eurogroup for Animals
- FAADA
- Fish Welfare Initiative
- Green REV Institute
- Greenpeace España
- In Defense of Animals
- KYMA Sea conservation and research
- LadyFreethinker
- Loomus
- Loowatt
- Menorca Preservation
- Mercy for Animals
- Ocean Born Foundation
- Ocean Culture Life
- Oceana UK
- One Kind
- PACMA

- PETA
 - Sea First
 - SeaLegacy
 - Sentient Media
 - The Montreal SPCA
 - Think Fish
 - THL-UK
 - Veganiza tu Vida
 - Welfarm
 - World Cetacean Alliance
 - World Federation for Animals
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- Alistair Lawrence, Professor of Animal and Veterinary Sciences, Scotland's Rural College
 - Amir Kassam, FRSB, OBE, Visiting professor in the School of Agriculture at the University of Reading, and member of the Global Forum of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
 - Andrew Knight MANZCVS, DipECAWBM (AWSEL), DipACAW, FRCVS, PFHEA, Veterinary Professor of Animal Welfare
 - Andrew Rowan, Founder, Wellbeing International, former Professor at Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine
 - Becca Franks, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at New York University
 - Ben Goldsmith, Chief Executive, Menhaden Plc
 - Billo Heinzpeter Studer, Founder of think.fish
 - Bishop Dominic Walker, OGS, DL, former Bishop of Monmouth
 - Carol Royle, actor and producer
 - Dame Joanna Lumley
 - Dave Goulson, FRSE FRES, Professor of Biology at the University of Sussex
 - David Madden, KCMG, British Ambassador to Greece (1999-2004), Senior Member, St Antony's College, Oxford
 - Heather Browning, Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Southampton
 - Jeffrey Masson, author, psychoanalyst and former Sanskrit Professor
 - Jennifer Jacquet, Assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Studies at New York University
 - John Webster, Emeritus Professor of Animal Husbandry at the University of Bristol
 - Jonathon Porritt, CBE, Founder, Forum for the Future
 - Joyce Tischler, Professor of Practice, Animal Law Center for Animal Law Studies at Lewis & Clark Law School
 - Lynne U. Sneddon, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Biological and Environmental Sciences, University of Gothenburg
 - Marc Bekoff, former Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Colorado, Boulder
 - Marita Candela, Professor in the Faculty of Law at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and Founder of the European Group of Animal Law Studies (EGALS)
 - Mark Eisler BA Vet MB MSc PhD MRCVS DipEVPC, Chair in Global Farm Animal Health, University of Bristol Veterinary School
 - Megan McCubbin, Zoologist, naturalist and broadcaster
 - Nitin Mehta, MBE, Patron, the Animal Interfaith Alliance
 - Peter Godfrey-Smith, Professor of History and Philosophy of Science at University of Sydney. Author of the book "Other Minds: The Octopus, the Sea, and the Deep Origins of Consciousness"
 - Peter Singer, Ira W. DeCamp Professor of Bioethics in the University Center for Human Values at Princeton University
 - Rabbi David Rosen, KSG, CBE.
 - Rev. Professor Martin Henig, animal ethicist
 - Shireen Kassam, MBBS, FRCPath, DipIBLM, Consultant Haematologist and Honorary Senior Lecturer at King's College Hospital, London
 - Silvia Caprioglio Panizza, Marie Skłodowska Fellow at the University of Pardubice, Czech Republic
 - Sy Montgomery, American naturalist, Author of the book "The Soul of an Octopus"
 - Tim Lang, Emeritus Professor of Food Policy, at City, University of London
 - Toby Knowles, BSc (Agric), MSc, PhD(Cantab), CStat, CBiol, CSci, FRSB, FHEA, Professor of Farming and Food Science, University of Bristol Veterinary School

