



December 11, 2013

The Honorable Ronald J. Holland
Mayor of Dillon

Via e-mail: ronh@townofdillon.com

Dear Mayor Holland,

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 3 million members and supporters, including thousands across Colorado, regarding the recent incident in which a terrified reindeer escaped from La Riva Mall. In light of this, we're urging you to pledge never again to use live animals at the Lighting of Dillon ceremony or any other events in the town of Dillon. A mall filled with thousands of noisy shoppers, bright lights, and excited children is an entirely unsuitable environment for reindeer or any other animals, as they can become disoriented and be seriously injured or even killed.

The event at La Riva Mall was not the first time that a reindeer has escaped from captivity and endangered town residents. Just this month, two captive reindeer escaped from Victoria Park in London the day before their scheduled appearance at a supermarket festival. In December 2011, two runaway reindeer were spotted along a Texas highway after escaping from their trailer, and in 2010, a reindeer broke free from a church nativity scene in Lakeland, Fla., before searchers found him, frightened and hiding under an elf house.

Animals used in the entertainment industry, including holiday displays, are deprived of everything that is natural and important to them. Laughing Valley Ranch, the organization that brought this frightened reindeer to the event, has been cited repeatedly by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for failing to provide animals—including two older reindeer, one of whom had a hunch back and a stiff gait yet was still being used for exhibits—with adequate veterinary care, failing to trim animals' hooves, and maintaining insufficient facilities, which on numerous occasions have had broken wires and sharp points that could injure animals. Animals in captivity often become despondent and develop neurotic and self-destructive behavior, including pacing, rocking, swaying, bar-biting, and self-mutilation. Also, these animals pose a definite risk to public health because they can transmit numerous diseases to humans, such as rabies, salmonellosis, sarcoptic mange, and ringworm.

We hope you'll agree that there's no place during the holiday season or at any time of the year for compromising the well-being of an animal and public safety. Please make the humane decision not to use live animals at any future events held in the town of Dillon. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alicia Woempner
Special Projects Division Manager

cc: Joe Wray, Town Manager (jwray@townofdillon.com)

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