

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

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October 1, 2021

The Honorable C. David Eyster
District Attorney
Mendocino County

Via e-mail: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Eyster:

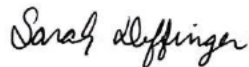
I hope this letter finds you well. I'm writing to request that your office add cruelty-to-animals charges, as appropriate, to the aggravated arson and related charges that Devin Lamar Johnson already faces in connection with the devastating Hopkins fire in Calpella. The suffering endured by animals in this blaze must not be ignored.

While it's well known that the fire has destroyed at least 46 homes and other structures and more than 250 acres of land, catastrophic fires also inflict terror and suffering on many domesticated and wild animals and cause them to endure prolonged, agonizing deaths. For example, the Hopkins fire is known to have killed finches, parakeets, and parrots. According to residents' social media posts, at least three dogs and two cats also died, while other cats were severely burned and required veterinary treatment.

[Cal. Penal Code § 597\(b\)](#) states that any person who "tortures, torments ... or cruelly kills any animal, or causes ... any animal to be ... tortured, tormented ... or cruelly killed" is guilty of cruelty to animals. [Cal. Penal Code § 599b](#) states that "'torment,' 'torture,' and 'cruelty' include every act ... whereby unnecessary or unjustifiable physical pain or suffering is caused or permitted." Because Johnson is accused of intentionally and maliciously starting a wildfire that has led to unnecessary and unjustifiable pain, suffering, and death for numerous animals, we respectfully ask that investigators and your office add cruelty charges to those that he already faces, in the same way that an [Oregon prosecutor did last year regarding a defendant in a similar case](#).

Thank you for your consideration and for the difficult work that you do.

Sincerely,



Sarah Deffinger
Senior Evidence Analyst
Cruelty Investigations Department

Affiliates:

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- PETA India
- PETA France
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- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
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