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Finance Committee
Energy and Public Utilities Subcommittee



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The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

June 13, 2022

Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio
Office of the Secretary
Department of Natural Resources
Tawes State Office Building, 580 Taylor Ave., Annapolis, MD 21401 - 2397

Dear Secretary Haddaway-Riccio,

I am writing to you regarding my concern with regard to disturbing experiments that involve invasive brain experiments on barn owls. These experiments are being performed by Johns Hopkins University (JHU), Assistant Professor, Shreesh Mysore.

It appears that Professor Mysore failed to acquire the requisite scientific collecting permits from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources during the years 2015-2018. These permits are required by state law. In addition to Professor Mysore's failure to comply with state law on the permit acquisition issue, it appears that Professor Mysore has been violating state law by killing the owls, which is expressly prohibited (Maryland Code, Natural Resources Section 10-909).

In a letter to Professor Mysore dated May 12, 2022, DNR revoked his permit, citing that conditions in it were "inconsistent" with the law, and the agency issued a new permit that specifically "disallows...euthanizing the birds." In light of the fact that the experiments cause significant physical harm to the owls, I would ask that the DNR investigate how it is that the experiments are being conducted, if the owls are being used and not killed. I would think that the experiments would have terminated as of the May 12 letter from DNR, but I am very concerned that if the experiments are continuing that there is a possibility the owls are indeed being killed by Professor Mysore.

Furthermore, I think that it is imperative that DNR determine the number of owls that have been killed during the entirety of Professor Mysore's experiments and determine what the penalty is for having violated state law for so many years. Certainly, in addition to the imposition of the referenced penalties, the DNR should immediately terminate his current permit if it is determined that any owls have been killed since May 12th of this year.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter and I very much look forward to your response and the outcome of the requested investigation into Professor Mysore's use of the owls.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Benjamin F. Kramer".

Ben Kramer