

May 15, 2002

Mr. Oscar Lathlin
Minister of Conservation
Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0V8 Canada

Dear Mr. Lathlin:

We were horrified to learn from our friends at People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals that at least three of our country's wild polar bears had been captured and were living under miserable conditions in the Suarez Bros. tropical circus. It is heartbreaking to see these beautiful bears, regarded in Canada as a national treasure, belittled and mistreated by the operators of a traveling show, who seek only to profit from their misery. We thank you for your previous actions in behalf of these animals but wish to inform you that the sad plight of these bears remains unchanged. Just last week, the polar bears were allegedly abandoned by the circus in a parking lot for 36 hours without access to food or water. We are writing to ask that the Ministry of Conservation follow the lead of Germany, where the polar bears lived previously, and demand that the bears be released from the circus.

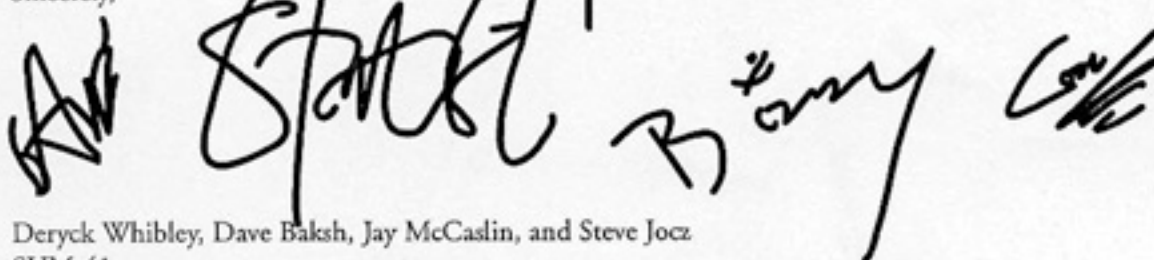
Recently, the German Ministry for the Environment and Ministry of Finance insisted that Suarez Bros. Circus relinquish custody of two of the polar bears sold to it by the Berliner Circus-Union, a former German state circus. In strongly worded letters to the Suarez Bros. Circus, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the German government demanded that the two bears, Kenneth and Boris, the former born in the wild in Canada and sold to Rohr Zoo and the latter born at Zoo Rostock, be surrendered to a facility of its choice. This unprecedented demand came after PETA provided documentation to the German government of the bears' atrocious living conditions.

Last month, a polar bear named Alaska was rescued from the circus after PETA discovered that the circus had provided fraudulent documentation of the bear's identity to U.S. authorities. Alaska is now living the good life at the Baltimore Zoo with her new polar bear partner, Magnet.

We would like to see the same happy ending for Kenneth, Barle, and Royal, the three bears captured in 1985 in Western Hudson Bay, Manitoba. Manitoba has since enacted policies that restrict the transfer of polar bears to zoos that meet high standards of care. It is clear that the Manitoba government never intended for these three polar bears to end up as an attraction in a third-rate traveling circus and that it must, therefore, share our desire to see these bears rescued from their unbearable living conditions.

We ask that the Ministry of Conservation contact the Suarez Bros. Circus and use its international influence as an agency of the bears' country of origin to persuade the circus to surrender custody of Kenneth, Barle, and Royal to a responsible, more suitable facility. PETA, in cooperation with the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA), is prepared to place these bears at facilities that will allow them regular access to cooling pools of water, room to roam, and, most importantly, freedom from the constant threat of physical punishment.

Sincerely,



Deryck Whibley, Dave Baksh, Jay McCaslin, and Steve Jocz