



Macdonald House
1 Grosvenor Square
London W1K 4AB

February 8, 2007

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Beckett, MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and
Commonwealth Affairs
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

The Rt. Hon. Ian McCartney, MP
Minister of State for Trade
Department for Trade and Industry
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

Dear Secretary of State Beckett and Minister McCartney,

I am writing to convey Canada's concern over the UK government's pronouncements in Parliament this week with respect to the conduct of the Canadian seal hunt, which include a call for a widened EU ban on seal products.

The UK government will be well aware that independent veterinary experts consider the hunting practices employed to be humane. Canada's seal hunting methods have been studied and approved, amongst others, by the *Royal Commission on Seals and Sealing* which found that the methods used compare favourably to those used to hunt any other wild animals, and those used to slaughter domestic animals -- like cattle and poultry -- for human consumption.

Canada's enforcement of sealing regulations is robust and comprehensive. Regulations and licensing policies are kept under active review, and stipulate hunting seasons, quotas, vessel size, methods of dispatch, as well as instruction and training of seal hunters. Offenders are held to account.

In short, the seal hunt is not only considered to be humane, but it is also a sustainable and an economically viable activity based on sound conservation principles. Moreover, it provides a much-needed income for isolated communities that have suffered from the closure of local fisheries.

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The Government of Canada takes seriously concerns over the seal hunt and, as you know, is always ready to engage actively in a science-based dialogue on the subject with the UK government and Parliament. We believe that the nature of the UK government's statement in Westminster, particularly its declaration that the hunt is inhumane, is unfounded and unhelpful.

I urge Her Majesty's Government to continue to approach the issue of the seal hunt in an objective and constructive manner, and to give full consideration to the hunt's responsible management by the Government of Canada.

I would be pleased to discuss this issue further with you, your ministry and your parliamentary colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JR Wright', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James R. Wright
High Commissioner for Canada

cc: Rt. Hon. David Miliband, MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

cc: Rt. Hon. Alistair Darling, MP
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry