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The Secretary
Legislative Council, Economy and Infrastructure Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002
To the Parliamentary Committee regarding the **Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture.**

I am writing to express my absolute opposition to this motion. Any reactionary retaliation reflected in any proposed new trespass laws, based on animal rights activism, is unjust.

The media have been caught up in the recurring confected statement made by farmers and the misinformed public that "farmers are frightened for their lives and the lives of their families." This could not be further from the truth. To date, there have been **no recorded circumstances** where activists have gone anywhere near the private homes of farmers. This is a blatant lie that seeks to deliberately mislead the public.

Activists and whistleblowers have never intended to incite violence. They do not want to break laws. They only intend to expose the hidden atrocities involved in the treatment of animals within these factory farms (always set a vast distance away from any 'family home'). There have been no recorded incidents of activists behaving in a violent manner (although the same cannot be said for farmers). As mentioned in Andy Meddick's parliamentary speech where he debated the inquiry: *"the sexism and misogyny that comes from the mouths of the supporters of these industries is reprehensible."* Threats of violence abide on the side of the farmers.

To date there have only been a handful of events, Australia-wide, where activists and whistleblowers have trespassed onto private property. The media storm would have the public believe otherwise. Existing legislation is sufficient as it is, without the need for inflated penalties that rather reflect reactionary laws as opposed to any rational law. **Using hyped up public opinion to pass laws is also the best camouflage for dangerous and insidious laws to creep in to other areas.**

Talk involving biosecurity is another confected threat. **There are no incidents of animal activists causing biosecurity risks in Australia.** There are, though, many incidents of disease outbreaks caused by intensive animal agriculture. The factory farms that animal activists and whistleblowers are exposing are breeding grounds for microbial resistance in themselves. They are plagued by rats and mice, maggots, birds, feral cats, and every other disease vector imaginable, most feeding on rotting carcasses. **No recorded problems with biosecurity have ever been related to animal activists.** Animal activists, wearing bio-secure clothing, have also always complied with the Livestock Disease Control Act 1994, Livestock Management Act 2010, and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986. The same cannot be said for farmers and their workers.

There are incredibly few regulatory systems in place to ensure current welfare conditions are not breached by animal ag farmers. Concerned citizens have instead been driven to expose the breaching of animal and agricultural welfare conditions. If these were properly regulated, the animal activists' need to trespass would no longer exist. Animal protection is not currently guaranteed by current laws.

Internationally CCTV cameras are now compulsory within slaughterhouses in England, Scotland and France. If we followed suit there would be no need for animal activists to exist.

In summary I am against this motion for the following reasons:

1. **It seeks to criminalise activists and whistleblowers** acting on their moral compass to help others from violence while protecting the perpetrators of this violence.
2. **It is using biosecurity as a reason to attack activists** whilst we know this is a concocted threat.
3. **There have been only a handful of events where activists have trespassed onto private land**, not the numerous occurrences of 'terrorism' that have been concocted. No act of violence by an activist toward a farmer has ever been recorded. **Using hyped up, misinformed public opinion to pass laws is reactionary. It is also the best camouflage for dangerous and insidious laws to creep in to other areas.**
4. Use of CCTV footage should be installed in all factory farms first. **The stakeholders in this motion are the public.** They want to know how animals are treated and they have a right to