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**PATAKI SHOOTS DOWN STRINGER ANIMAL RIGHTS BILL**

**STRINGER TO PATAKI: NO ECONOMY SHOULD BE BASED ON ANIMAL CRUELTY**

**GOVERNOR PUTS PROFITS OVER PROTECTING ANIMALS FROM OUTRAGEOUS ABUSE**

Assemblymember Scott Stringer (D-Manhattan) denounced today Governor Pataki's veto of his canned hunts legislation (A.4609a/S.2735a), which would strengthen the ban on canned shoots, or the paid "hunting" of animals in confined areas where animals cannot escape. The legislation is sponsored by Senator Frank Padavan (R-Queens) and has widespread bi-partisan support in both the Assembly and the Senate.

Currently, canned shooting facilities are able to operate under state law if the hunting "farm", or area, is 10 acres or more in size. Stringer's legislation aimed to outlaw canned shoots on any size acreage. 12 states currently have bans on canned hunts.

"This is the most obvious example of the Governor pandering to big money groups, rather than making an informed decision about what is best for New York State. His veto message is full of factual errors, and it fails to explain this most deplorable decision," Stringer stated. "Unfortunately, defenseless animals will pay the price."

Pataki's veto message states that Stringer's bill "outlaws the hunting of big game animals for a fee in any enclosed area . . . regardless of whether the animals have a means of eluding hunters." However, Stringer's bill specifically outlaws animal shoots that do not allow for a means of escape. Pataki's veto message additionally argues that the bill would hurt upstate hunting farms and the hunting preserves operating throughout New York State. Yet, the Assemblymember's legislation exempts any and all hunting practices deemed lawful under the Environmental Protection Law, including operators with a domestic game animal breeder's license issued by the Department of Environmental Conservation, provisions which cover most hunting preserves.

"It is shocking that Pataki would put profits over protecting animals from such cruel abuse." Stringer argued. "The Governor may not agree, but I believe there is a line between hunting and animal cruelty. My bill would have made that line clearer in New York State."

"Governor Pataki has thumbed his nose at New Yorkers, including animal advocates, hunters, and upstate newspapers that called for passage of this humane bill," said Michael Markarian, president of The Fund for Animals. "He has aligned himself with the handful of unscrupulous individuals who would pay big bucks to shoot a zebra ambling up to a feed truck or a Corsican ram trapped in the corner of a fence."

"While we have had a setback in strengthening the original canned shoot ban, our work is far from over. Next session I fully intend to press ahead to ensure that a full ban on canned shoots will become law in our State," Stringer stated. "Simply put, no economy should be based on animal cruelty."