

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 31, 2011

The Honorable Kenneth L. Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

We are writing regarding the proposal submitted by The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) to the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a collaborative pilot project to test the use of a non-lethal, one-shot, multi-year Porcine Zona Pellucida (PZP) immunocontraceptive vaccine for stabilizing and reducing the urban white-tailed deer population in Rock Creek Park. The HSUS submitted its proposal in response to a NPS plan to cull the Rock Creek Park deer population using feeding stations manned by sharpshooters.

Under the Draft White-tailed Deer Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) released in the fall of 2009, NPS proposes to close an undefined portion of Rock Creek Park for up to one month or more in order to cull deer using lethal control methods. Rock Creek Park is heavily used by our region's residents and tourists alike, and abuts residential and urban communities. Closing the park to residents and tourists alike would impose an enormous burden on the community. The HSUS proposal would not require the park to be closed. Also, according to the DEIS, it would cost taxpayers \$262,000 over five years to implement the lethal deer management plan. In contrast, the HSUS plan would cost \$183,000 over the same period, and HSUS has agreed to assume 50 percent of that cost. The HSUS plan would therefore cost taxpayers \$91,500, a savings of \$170,500.

We understand that the NPS's National Capital Region (NCR) administrators initially rejected the HSUS proposal. We are also aware that the HSUS appealed the NCR's rejection directly to Assistant Secretary Will Shafroth and submitted a comprehensive proposal citing numerous successful scientific tests of PZP, most notably at NPS properties at Fire Island, New York and Assateague Island, Maryland. In fact, we understand that on Fire Island, PZP was used as an alternative to a lethal control program similar to the one proposed for Rock Creek Park, and has successfully decreased the deer population of the island and significantly reduced conflicts between deer and local residents. The HSUS proposal could help inform the approach to deer conflict resolution and serve as an additional model for other national parks and urban communities around the country.

We ask that you give full and fair consideration, consistent with applicable law, rules and regulations, to the HSUS proposal. We look forward to your prompt reply.

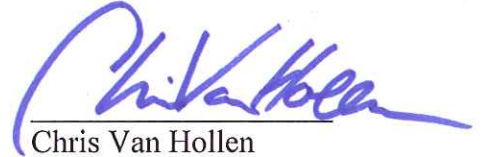
Sincerely,



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



James P. Moran
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress