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VIA E-MAIL (media@elkhartpa.com)

Vicki Elaine Becker, Prosecutor
Office of the Prosecuting Attorney
301 S. Main Street, Suite 100
Elkhart, IN 46516

RE: Jayco Cats Crushed Cases

John Lipscomb, Case #20D03-2506-F6-000626
Defendant, Travis McKay, Case #20D03-2506-F6-000624
Defendant, Arlin Hochstetler, Case #20D03-2506-F6-000625

Dear Prosecutor Becker:

I am an attorney duly admitted to the practice of law in New York. I am also a member of the New York State Bar Association's Committee on Animals and the Law.

I write this letter to formally and respectfully request that you reopen the cases in the above-referenced matters and reinstate criminal charges.

John Noone, Esq., Major, US Army (Retired), licensed to practice law in Colorado; Paul Mueller (Former News Anchor and Influencer); Animal Victory; Meow Mission; In Defense Of Animals; and National Animal News are among the almost 17,500 signatures acquired from around the United States in a petition that joins me, in addition to your local protestors, in objecting to the horrible cruelty imposed upon these defenseless animals.

All three men involved in the incident were charged with violating Indiana Code 35-46-3-12(c), which is defined as the offense of torturing or mutilating a vertebrate animal and is classified as a Level 6 felony. This provision explicitly addresses situations where a person knowingly or intentionally inflicts severe pain or suffering upon an animal.

Placing an animal in a trash compactor will inflict severe harm that leads to death. Such actions are unequivocally regarded as animal cruelty and are illegal in most jurisdictions. There is no ambiguity regarding this crime. Placing live animals in a trash compactor is *prima facie* evidence that they were destroyed in a manner that prolonged their suffering.

The immense force of the compactor would cause severe trauma to the animals' bodies, including crushing injuries, broken bones, and organ damage. Not only would the crushing cause acute physical pain, but also the animals would have suffered extreme terror of being trapped and unable to escape. Additionally, trash compactors do NOT work quickly, and the process is prolonged and painful.

The method is undeniably cruel and terrifying. It is difficult to fathom the magnitude of the cats' terror as they were shoved into a dark microwave box, and as they heard and then felt the relentless walls of a loud machine close in around them. There is nothing quick or painless about this horrific method.

An additional consideration in not reinstating criminal charges is that others will engage in this barbaric and psychotic behavior in the future because there will be no fear of punishment.

The proper method of ending these animals' lives, which should not have been done in the first place since there was no hard evidence of any property damage and there were many other non-lethal options available, would have been humane euthanasia by animal control.

I, along with In Defense of Animals; Animal Victory; National Animal News; Paul Mueller; and Meow Mission, collectively have over one million followers on social media. In fact, Elkhart County tourism follows me, as I spend a significant amount of money there each year while traveling to and from Yellowstone. I have actively promoted Elkhart County on my social media platforms.

Currently, my collaborators and I are planning to publicly speak out against Elkhart County's misguided decision. We will urge our large audience to boycott Jayco and the County unless the charges are reinstated.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Maria Proietti, Esq.

cc: Megan Erwin, *Mayor's Office Chief of Staff* (via e-mail: megan.erwin@coei.org;
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