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June 11, 2009

Honorable Kenneth C. Twisselman II
Kern County Superior Court
First Floor, Courtroom 8
1415 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, California 93301

Re: *People v. Bemis, et al.*

Dear Judge Twisselman:

We, the directors of Animal Advocates Alliance, would like to express our sincere pleasure at the recent successful prosecution of Cynthia Bemis and Cynthia Trapani on charges of felony animal cruelty. The undersigned personally took part in the evacuation of Ms. Bemis' dogs from her property in Mojave, and were shocked and saddened at the horrific conditions in which these innocent animals had been kept for so many years.

As you know, Ms. Bemis and Ms. Trapani have a long history of animal cruelty and neglect, and have been cited numerous times in Kern, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles counties for animal-related offenses. As you are also no doubt aware, animal hoarders have a high rate of recidivism, as has been proven by Ms. Bemis and Ms. Trapani over the years. Despite constant efforts by animal control officers in three counties to prevent these women from abusing countless dogs and cats, Ms. Bemis and Ms. Trapani continued to "collect" hundreds of animals, often moving them from county to county to avoid legal ramifications.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that you sentence Ms. Bemis and Ms. Trapani to the maximum penalty allowed under the California Penal Code of six to nine years imprisonment. Unless Ms. Bemis and Ms. Trapani are physically removed from society, they will undoubtedly continue their pattern of animal abuse and neglect. While it is undeniable that incarceration is costly, and county budgets are tight, it is important to consider that Ms. Bemis' and Ms. Trapani's animal hoarding activities have already cost the taxpayers many thousands of dollars. In addition to the numerous hours county workers have spent attempting to protect these animals,

for which they have received due compensation, thirty-five of the most severely abused “Bemis Dogs” were cared for in county shelters for as many as *three years* while this case slowly wound its way through the court system.

In addition, although the animal rescue community has worked tirelessly to find rescues or homes for the nearly two-hundred dogs and cats that remained on the Bemis property at the time of the conviction, approximately fifty are still waiting. If placements are not found in the immediate future for these fifty, they will soon become the responsibility of various county animal shelters as well. Clearly, if Ms. Bemis and Ms. Trapani are not incarcerated for their crimes, they will continue to hoard and abuse animals, and the taxpayers will continue to foot the bill. Rescue and other humane groups such as ours, which have little funding as it is, will continue to be adversely affected, as the funds used to facilitate the rescue of these animals could be applied towards other humane efforts. Most importantly, however, countless dogs and cats will continue to suffer at their hands.

Thank you in advance for carefully considering the plight of these animals when making your sentencing decisions for Ms. Bemis and Ms. Trapani. Animal Advocates Alliance firmly believes that imposition of the maximum allowable sentences is imperative in order to communicate the message that animal abuse and neglect will not be tolerated in Kern County.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lee Goldberg
Director, Animal Advocates Alliance



Michele Westhoff
Director, Animal Advocates Alliance

**Animal Advocates Alliance is a California 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation dedicated to promoting the humane treatment of animals through legal advocacy, humane education initiatives, and support of animal rescue and adoption.*