



January 21, 2025

Tom Dunkel
President
The Punxsutawney Groundhog Club

Dear Mr. Dunkel:

I'm writing again on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally, including many thousands in Pennsylvania—with a *sweet* new offer: Retire Phil to a reputable sanctuary with his family, and every year we'll provide a giant vegan "Weather Reveal" cake (it would be the first in the world this year) to share with revelers at Gobbler's Knob. If the inside of the cake is blue, there will be six more weeks of winter. If it's pink, there will be an early spring. This would allow you to still make tourism *dough* while showing Phil a *slice* of decency. It would be at least as accurate as asking a groundhog what to expect in a way that doesn't even reflect his nature.

You *better* believe that for Phil, Groundhog Day is no *piece of cake*. Groundhogs are shy prey animals who, when allowed, actively avoid humans. Yet, year after year, Phil is transported to Gobbler's Knob, *whisked* on stage, and subjected to a noisy announcer, screaming crowds, and flashing lights against all his natural instincts. If approached in his natural habitat, he would run away in fear, not volunteer to live year-round in captivity, unable to do anything that's natural and important to him like hibernate or burrow—just to be a town's once-a-year fake meteorologist.

If our suggestions for alternatives to exploiting an intelligent, sensitive animal are starting to feel like *Groundhog Day*, it's because, in the 21st century, as more and more people realize that every animal is an individual with their own interests, needs, and personalities—as well as being able to feel pain, fear, joy, and love—we know that locals and tourists who genuinely respect Phil want him to live his life doing what's natural to him.

We're not going to *sugarcoat* it: It's high time for Punxsutawney to *rise* to the occasion and follow the example of kind communities like the Village of Babylon, New York, which has a willing human prognosticator in a costume to protect—not exploit—our fellow animals. If you don't like this idea, *the icing on the cake* is that we have another offer: We'd be happy to send you a large thermometer for Gobbler's Knob instead that reads, "If it's still cold, it's still winter," which would aptly represent the absurdity of the current form of this tired old spectacle. We look forward to hearing from you, as always.

Very truly yours,

Ingrid Newkirk
President

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