

PETA's letter to NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman follows:

March 6, 2017

Gary Bettman
Commissioner
National Hockey League

Dear Mr. Bettman,

I'm writing on behalf of PETA and our more than 5 million members and supporters worldwide to urge you to institute a policy against allowing animals at NHL games and events. Public condemnation was swift after disturbing video footage was released showing penguins scrambling in terror after being paraded in front of a screaming Penguins-Flyers audience at Heinz Field and in close proximity to ear-splitting fireworks. A crowded arena is no place for animals, and as evidenced by the overwhelmingly negative response to the penguin promotion, it's clear that the public does not support the abuse of animals for human entertainment.

It's inherently stressful for wild animals—who naturally shun contact with humans and are extremely sensitive to environmental deviations—to be hauled around and used as props with or without explosives going off. Hockey fans come to see talented athletes compete, not shy animals be terrorized.

Being held in captivity is stressful enough to make penguins susceptible to illness, and putting them in a chaotic arena only makes matters worse. While spectators can understand what fireworks are, birds have no comprehension of the startling noise and commotion. There's no refuting that these birds were terrified into a flight response, and it's disturbing that the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium—which relinquished its Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) accreditation in 2015 after refusing to adhere to the AZA's standards for the safe management of elephants—put these birds at risk.

Given your zero-tolerance position with regard to throwing objects onto the ice (including octopuses but excepting hat tricks), we're confident that you'll agree that live animals do not belong there, either. **May we please hear that the NHL will implement a policy against having animals at its games and events?**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



John Di Leonardo, M.S.
Senior Campaigner
Animals in Entertainment