April 22, 2022

The Honorable Don Beyer  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515  

Dear Representative Beyer:

I write on behalf of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), Humane Society Legislative Fund (HSLF) and our millions of supporters nationwide to express our support and endorsement of the Ejiao Act (H.R. 5203) of which you are the sponsor, which would amend the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to ban the sale or transport of ejiao made using donkey skins, or products containing ejiao made using donkey skins, in interstate or foreign commerce.

Ejiao is a gelatin derived from the hides of slaughtered donkeys. It is used in Chinese medicine, cosmetics, and luxury products. The ejiao industry’s demand for approximately 8-10 million donkey hides annually has caused its producers to look beyond the borders of China to developing countries in Africa and elsewhere as a source for hides. The industry is decimating donkey populations worldwide, particularly in countries with high rates of poverty. Surprisingly, the U.S. imports an estimated $12 million worth of products containing ejiao annually, making our country the world’s third largest importer, behind China and Hong Kong. Passage of the Ejiao Act is critical for protecting the world’s donkey populations.

Donkeys going to slaughter suffer long before they reach the killing floor. Up to 20% of them die in transport from stress or injuries. Slaughter practices are barbaric; inadequate stunning leaves many donkeys conscious during slaughter.

Further, the working families in the developing countries where donkeys are used as a primary source of transportation are suffering due to the theft of their animals for the scurrilous ejiao market. These families cannot afford to lose or replace their donkeys, so their lives and livelihoods are jeopardized by this trade.

While several U.S.-based companies have pledged not to sell products containing ejiao, others including a major online retailer continue to do so. Only a federal ban on the commercial sale and transport of this product will signal that the U.S. will no longer enable and reward such cruelty.

HSUS and HSLF thank you for introducing the Ejiao Act and urge Congress to take swift action on the legislation.

Sincerely,

Keith Dane  
Senior Director, Equine Protection  
The Humane Society of the United States

Tracie Letterman  
Vice President, Federal Affairs  
Humane Society Legislative Fund