

Repeal the Oman Free Trade Agreement: *A Bad Deal for Animals and the Environment*



Omani wildlife:
the endangered Arabian Tahr

Ratified in 2006, the Oman Free Trade Agreement undermines animal and environmental protection efforts:

- Oman has not signed on to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES),

which regulates international trade in wildlife. However, according to CITES reports, Oman is home to 24 species of animals that are threatened with extinction and 189 additional species whose trade must be closely controlled for their survival.

- The Oman agreement continues provisions from previous trade agreements which allow corporations to sue governments if they believe an environmental, labor, or animal welfare protection has inhibited them from making their full profits. This process virtually overrides national sovereignty, the efficacy of democratically created laws and punishes governments if they are trying to protect people or natural resources from being exploited.

-The natural gas reserves in Oman are being used to create aluminum, fertilizer and methanol as well as refine crude oil. The industrial pollution created as a result is negatively impacting the health and populations of sea turtles and endangered fish. Limits on development are specifically prohibited in the Oman agreement, and the expansion of tourism and fisheries on Oman beaches are destroying nesting and feeding locations for various species of sea turtles. With the agreement passed, these industry practices can only be expected to increase.

- Nonhuman animals aren't the only ones who will suffer under this agreement. Public Citizen has stated that "The Sultanate of Oman is an oppressive monarchy that has been listed by the U.S. State Department for human trafficking, for severe restrictions on freedom of the press, for harassing human rights activists, for forbidding independent labor unions." Imports of duty-free textiles from Oman will increase and threaten manufacturing jobs in the United States. Many of the manufacturers in Oman use sweatshop labor. It is expected that there will also be an increase in human trafficking of indentured workers from Bangladesh and China to supply the labor.

It's vital that animal and environmental advocates contact our representatives in Congress to urge them to repeal the Oman Free Trade Agreement!.

If you aren't sure who represents you in Congress, go to <http://snipurl.com/LegLookup> to find out.

To find out how your House Representative voted on this issue, visit http://www.vote-smart.org/issue_keyvote_member.php?vote_id=3875

To find out how your 2 federal Senators voted on this issue, visit http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=109&session=2&vote=00190

CALL YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES:

Call the U.S. Capitol at (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to your Representative's office.

When you reach your representative's office, ask to speak to the person who handles trade issues.

Give your name, say that you are a constituent, and say that you want your rep to vote no on OFTA, an inhumane, anti-animal trade agreement.

Here's a sample of what you can say during your call:

If your rep voted FOR OFTA:

Hi, my name is _____. I live in _____ (your city) _____. I'm calling to urge (Representative/Senator) _____ to introduce legislation to repeal the Oman Free Trade Agreement (OFTA). I'm concerned about the agreement's weak environmental provisions and unlimited investor protections as these could destroy habitats, threaten endangered species, and weaken animal protection laws. OFTA mandates no minimum environmental standards or enforcement of major environmental and species protection agreements. It also allows corporations to challenge US government decisions on federal natural resource contracts. This is unacceptable. I was disappointed four years ago when (Rep/Senator) _____'s voted for the agreement, but (he/she) can correct this mistake by introducing repeal legislation.. I'd appreciate a statement in writing explaining (Rep/Senator's) view on repealing the Oman Free Trade Agreement. My address is (your address).

If your rep voted AGAINST OFTA:

Hi, my name is _____. I live in _____ (your city) _____. I'm calling to urge (Representative/Senator) _____ to introduce legislation to repeal the Oman Free Trade Agreement (OFTA). I'm concerned about the agreement's weak environmental provisions and unlimited investor protections as these could destroy habitats, threaten endangered species, and weaken animal protection laws. OFTA mandates no minimum environmental standards or

enforcement of major environmental and species protection agreements. It also allows corporations to challenge US government decisions on federal natural resource contracts. This is unacceptable. (Rep/Senator)_____ made the right decision four years ago when (he/she) voted against the agreement, and with a president who campaign on trade reform and more fair traders in

Congress than ever, now is the time to repeal the destructive trade agreement... I'd appreciate a statement in writing explaining (Rep/Senator's) view on repealing the Oman Free Trade Agreement. My address is (your address).

EMAIL, FAX AND WRITE YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES

TO EMAIL: Go to <http://snipurl.com/LegLookup> and find your elected officials. Click on "Send Message" for your two Senators and your Representative. Send an email to the attention of your legislator's aide on trade issues expressing your opinion on your legislators' vote on this issue.

TO FAX OR MAIL A LETTER Go to <https://community.hsus.org/humane/leg-lookup/search.html> and find your elected officials. Click on "View Info" for your Senators and Representatives and copy their fax numbers and mailing addresses. Write letters to your Representatives and both of your Senators expressing your opinion on their vote on this issue. Put your letter to the attention of your legislators' aide on trade issues. Fax and/or mail your letter.

SAMPLE LETTER

Send a separate to each of your legislators. Fill in your address, the date, choose Senator or Representative, your legislators' name, and choose one or the other of the words in parentheses, depending on your legislator's vote. Please modify and personalize using the additional info on this issue provided at the top of this alert

(Your Address)
Yo(Your City, State and Zip)
(Month) (Date), (Year)

(Senator/ Representative) (First and Last Name)
(Your Legislator's DC Office Street Address
City, State and Zip)

Dear (/Senator /Representative) (Last Name):

I am writing to urge you to introduce legislation to repeal the Oman Free Trade Agreement because its weak environmental provisions and strong investor protections have grave implications for animals. Oman is home to 24 species of animals that are threatened with extinction and 189 additional species whose trade must be closely controlled for their survival, but Oman has not ratified key species protection agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. OFTA mandates no minimum environmental standards, and there is no aspect of the agreement that would protect these animals in the future.

In addition, the agreement has provisions to challenge natural resource contracts, service contracts, and infrastructure projects that could result in unchecked development by corporations. Industrial pollution from oil refining and natural gas extraction has already led to the disturbance and destruction of beaches that serve as nesting and foraging sites for a variety of species of turtles including the critically endangered hawksbill turtle. With passage of this trade agreement, coastal development is likely to increase to the detriment of the already threatened wildlife.

Further, implementation of domestic environmental laws already in place can violate commercial obligations under OFTA, resulting in a challenge in binding, privately enforced tribunals run by corporate and government-appointed representatives. The tribunals can demand payment from governments for upholding their own laws and require them to weaken those laws. These provisions are deeply problematic and set the stage for habitat destruction, species exploitation and the weakening of environmental and animal protection laws.

Unless OFTA is repealed, farmed animals will also suffer.. Unlike the US, Omani farmers have not adopted intensive confinement factory farm agricultural systems, which produce meat more cheaply and cruelly than Oman's traditional farms. By failing to protect domestic producers in Oman while guaranteeing tariff-free market access for US industrial meat and dairy producers, OFTA will encourage US factory farm agriculture corporations to absorb market share from Oman's domestic producers, meaning that more animals will suffer in factory farms.

I'd appreciate any statement you can mail me clarifying your views on this issue.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)