

**ANIMAL WELFARE WATCH ONTARIO (AWWO) – ONE STRONG VOICE FOR ANIMALS
MEDIA RELEASE**

**AWWO SAYS: GOVERNMENT’S DECISION TO APPEAL COURT DECISION ON
OSPCA IS A DISASTER FOR ANIMALS IN ONTARIO**

Toronto, January 25, 2019 - - On January 24, 2019, the TVO program The Agenda with Steve Paikin featured a panel discussion about the recent Ontario Superior Court (OSPC) decision that declared the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals’ (OSPCA) policing authority to be unconstitutional. In the midst of the discussion, one of the panelists, Brian Schiller a lawyer for the OSPCA, revealed that he’d been informed by the Ministry of the Attorney General that the OSC decision would be appealed.

“This is a bombshell”, says Mike Zimmerman, co-founder of Animal Welfare Watch Ontario. “The government actually has until February 1 to decide on an appeal. If this remark by Mr. Schiller is true, then they’ve already decided. This is a big decision and it seems ridiculous that it would be disclosed in such a backhanded way. This is a disaster for animals in Ontario.”

A January 2, 2019 OSC decision voided the OSPCA’s policing authority but delayed its implementation for a year to enable the government to implement a new system of animal welfare for the province. “That’s a tight timeframe,” says Zimmerman but at least it was precise. Now, the appeal will likely take one to two years before a decision by the Ontario Court of Appeal (OCA). That decision could either void the OSC decision which would return policing authority to the already dysfunctional and deteriorating OSPCA, or it could uphold the OSC decision that compels the government to implement a new system but the one-year “grace period” would only begin then. That means it could be two to three years before a new system is in place. The OSPCA is already doing a poor job and seems to be cutting back enforcement more and more. If a new system is three years away, animals are likely going to suffer.”

“There’s no doubt animals are going to go unprotected”, says AWWO’s Brenda Thompson. “The appeal creates this vacuum during which there will likely be fewer investigations. It breaks my heart that the people who make it their business to abuse animals such as operators of puppy mills and dogfighting rings will know that they are not being closely watched.

“We can hope Mr. Schiller’s comment is inaccurate,” says Zimmerman. “But, if it’s true, we have a lot of work to do. All AWWO members are urged to contact their MPPs and ask them to voice their concerns to the Attorney General. The message is: “Stop the appeal!”

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