



New Zealand House of Representatives
Te Whare Māngai o Aotearoa

Primary Production Committee
Komiti Whiriwhiri Take Ahumatua

54th Parliament
September 2026

**Petition of John Hellström: Do not reverse
the ban on the live export of farmed animals
by sea**

Presented to the House of Representatives
by Miles Anderson, Chairperson

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Petition of John Hellström: Do not reverse the ban on the live export of farmed animals by sea

Recommendation

The Primary Production Committee has considered the petition of John Hellström—Do not reverse the ban on the live export of farmed animals by sea—and recommends that the House take note of its report.

Request to keep ban on live exports of farmed animals by sea

The Primary Production Committee has considered the petition of John Hellström, which was presented to the House on 20 August 2024 by Hon Damien O'Connor, and transferred to us on 31 July 2025. The petition was signed by 57,357 people on the Parliament website and on paper, and requests:

That the House of Representatives not repeal the Animal Welfare Amendment Act 2022, which amended the Animal Welfare Act 1999 to ban the export of livestock by sea.

Comments from the petitioner

The petitioner provided a written submission. It highlighted the risks to animal welfare, the broad public opposition to the export of live animals, and the reputational harm that repealing the ban on live exports could have on New Zealand.

Our process

We invited several organisations and individuals, including key stakeholders, to provide written submissions. These submissions are now published on the Parliament website.

On 11 March 2026, the Associate Minister of Agriculture, Hon Andrew Hoggard, announced that the Government would not reinstate live animal exports this parliamentary term. Based on this statement, we did not proceed to hold oral hearings with submitters, as the petitioner's concerns had been addressed by the Government and no longer required committee attention. Because the ban on live exports is being maintained, we are satisfied that the petitioner's desired outcome has been achieved.

We have no further matters to bring to the attention of the House.

New Zealand Labour Party differing view

Labour supports the committee's recommendation that the House take note of the report on the Petition of John Hellström: Do not reverse the ban on the live export of farmed animals by sea. We acknowledge the 57,357 people who signed the petition and the petitioner's advocacy for animal welfare, New Zealand's international reputation, and public confidence in our primary sector.

Labour remains strongly opposed to the export of cattle by sea for breeding, or other purposes where animal welfare standards cannot be assured throughout the full journey and at the destination. The ban introduced through the Animal Welfare Amendment Act 2022 was a principled and necessary response to long-standing animal welfare risks, including stress, injury, disease, heat exposure, and the difficulty of ensuring appropriate care once animals leave New Zealand's jurisdiction.

The sinking of the *Gulf Livestock 1* in 2020 remains a stark reminder of the risks inherent in the live export trade. The vessel left Napier carrying thousands of cattle and later sank during Typhoon Maysak; 41 of the 43 crew members and all 5,867 cattle on board were lost. This tragedy demonstrated that live export by sea can place both animals and people in unacceptable danger.

We note the Associate Minister of Agriculture's statement that the Government will not reinstate live animal exports this parliamentary term. While this announcement means the immediate concern raised by the petition has been addressed, Labour remains concerned that the Government has not provided long-term certainty by committing to retain the ban beyond this term of Parliament. The absence of such a commitment risks ongoing uncertainty for exporters, animal welfare organisations, and the public.

Labour believes New Zealand's primary sector is strongest when it is underpinned by high animal welfare standards, public trust, and a reputation for ethical production. We therefore urge the Government to provide a clear and enduring commitment that the ban on live exports by sea will remain in place permanently.

Appendix

Committee procedure

The petition was signed by 57,357 people on the Parliament website and on paper. It was presented to the House by Hon Damien O'Connor on 20 August 2024 and referred to us on 31 July 2025. We met between 14 August 2025 and 17 September 2026 to consider it. We received written submissions from the petitioner and the following individuals and organisations:

- Animals Aotearoa
- BeefGen Ltd
- Dr Lynn Simpson
- Federated Farmers of New Zealand
- Hedley John Exporters Ltd
- Lyn Mansel
- Ministry for Primary Industries
- New Zealand Veterinary Association
- PinnacleAg Live Exports
- Progressive Livestock Ltd
- SAFE
- SPCA
- Veterinarians for Animal Welfare Aotearoa
- World Animal Protection.

Committee members

Miles Anderson (Chairperson from 12 March 2026)

Mark Cameron (Chairperson until 12 March 2026)

Steve Abel

Rachel Boyack

Mike Butterick (until 13 May 2026)

Dana Kirkpatrick (from 13 May 2026)

Hon Jo Luxton

Suze Redmayne.

Related resources

The documents we received as evidence in relation to this petition are available on the [Parliament website](#).