Dear (your City Councillor)

As your constituent, I am writing to share my concerns regarding the upcoming Professional Bull Riding event held by the Red River Exhibition Association at Assiniboia Downs on May 26th, 2023. For the reasons outlined in this letter, I request that you make a motion to prohibit this and all future bull riding events from occurring within the City of Winnipeg, including in areas zoned for agricultural events, like the Red River Exhibition grounds.

Professional bull riding events violate the 5 domains of animal welfare, which are pre-requisites to assessing an animals’ wellbeing. These events prioritize entertainment over animal welfare and dignity, and are well documented as causing distress, pain, injury, and even death to the animals forced to participate.

As you know, in 2013 the City of Winnipeg passed a municipal ban that no longer allows exotic circus animals to perform at venues within our city. It was deemed cruel and outdated to force these magnificent animals to perform tricks simply for entertainment purposes. Though the exhibition grounds are zoned for agricultural use, there is no difference between watching a bull buck in circles or a tiger jumping through a hoop. Both instances force the animal to travel unnecessarily long distances, and to continuously perform in unfamiliar, deafeningly loud spaces. The welfare cost to the animals far outweighs the entertainment benefit to the audience.

The aggressive nature of bulls during rodeo performances is a direct consequence of the intention to annoy and provoke them with violent kicking of spurs into their sides, along with other methods. Negative reinforcement training methods are commonly utilized to train the bulls to buck as violently as they can. Stressful and painful stimuli like electric shocks, weighted dummies, and flank straps train the animal to buck in response, with no reprieve until the desired bucking behaviour is performed.

As well, transportation is a major animal welfare concern. This is a circuit event that hauls the animals from city to city across North America. Bulls are forced to be continuously trailered and hauled unnaturally long distances across both the US and Canada. There is little to no opportunity for these animals to graze or have access to any sort of land or pasture. They only know a life of parking lots, metal trailers, and loud stadiums.

As you can see, for a multitude of reasons, professional bull riding events are an inhumane, irrelevant and a needless way to entertain the general public in 2023. Like with the banning of circus events in 2013, I hope that the City of Winnipeg will continue to listen to and act on public concerns regarding animal welfare. For the reasons I have stated in this letter, please cancel the Professional Bull Riding event on May 26th and ban future bull riding events, demonstrating that we are a city who takes matters of animal cruelty seriously and that there is no place for it here.

Your Constituent,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_