

From: **Steve Hindi** <shindishark@gmail.com>

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Subject: Continuing Concerns

To: Jon Bockman <jon.bockman@animalcharityevaluators.org>, Allison Smith <allison.smith@animalcharityevaluators.org>, Gina Stuessy <gina.stuessy@animalcharityevaluators.org>, kalista.barter@animalcharityevaluators.org, Erika Alonso <erika.alonso@animalcharityevaluators.org>, Peter Singer <singerp@gmail.com>, Robert Wiblin <robertwiblin@gmail.com>, Claire Zabel <clairerouisezabel@gmail.com>, Jonas Emanuel Müller <jonas.mueller@gmail.com>, Jeff Sebo <jeffsebo@gmail.com>, Peter Hurford <peter@peterhurford.com>, Sam Bankman-Fried <11235813sam@gmail.com>, Spencer Greenberg <spencer.g.greenberg@gmail.com>

Dear Mr. Bockman and Board members of Animal Charity Evaluators (ACE),

SHARK previously reached out to your organization because of serious concerns regarding ACE's review system, and how your Top Charities appear to be pre-destined due to relationships that constitute conflicts of interest revolving around Nick Cooney. We wrote to you with our concerns on June 9th, 2017. At Mr. Bockman's invitation, there was a follow-up conversation via Skype between Jon Bockman and Jonas Müller for ACE, and Stu Chaifetz and me for SHARK, on June 17th.

As was mentioned during that Skype conference, our June 9 letter used the term "*Advisory Board*," when it should have read "*ACE Advisors Facebook group*." While we regret any confusion this caused, we maintain our position that the organizations of those individuals who had any advisory role in ACE from the very start, or currently advise, or advise in the future, should not be considered for endorsement due to Conflicts of Interest.

During the June 17 call, Mr. Bockman implied that no one from the ACE Board responded to us because they have no problem with how ACE operates. While this may be the case, we want to give Board members another chance to respond in case they had questions or concerns about the issues raised.

As has been recognized, it is not a question if there are conflicts of interest revolving around Nick Cooney and the Top Charity list. As Mr. Bockman pointed out, we found some of these conflicts on ACE's own website. ACE's position is that being transparent and revealing those conflicts of interests negates any possible unethical behavior, while our position is that those acknowledgments merely confirm unethical behavior.

As an example, when President Trump admitted that he had fired the former FBI Director because of the Russian investigation, he was being very honest. His transparency, however, did not negate any possible unethical behavior arising from his actions.

It is similar to ACE acknowledging conflicts of interest and relationships with Nick Cooney, and subsequently sending funds, and/or giving Top Charity status to groups with which Mr. Cooney is involved. Bear in mind the Top Charity category is a fiscal classification, and hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars may be directed to those groups over time.

Please understand that we are not questioning anyone's dedication to the cause. That said, it appears that you are funneling large amounts of money to preselected organizations.

We were not the first to notice this issue. Nathan Harrison is a whistleblower who we wrote about in our last letter. During our Skype call, we repeatedly offered to put Mr. Harrison in touch with Mr. Mueller, but the offer wasn't accepted. After that call we wrote to Mr. Harrison and asked if he is willing to speak to any other Board member. This was his response:

"You can tell them I'd be happy to talk to them at their convenience, but note that Jon Bockman and Nick Cooney have both already turned down invitations to discuss it with me in an ARZone podcast."

We strongly suggest that you speak to Mr. Harrison. Whether you do or not will say a great deal about how you have fulfilled your due diligence as a Board member of ACE.

To reiterate, the following are the core problems with ACE:

- While giving itself the overly broad title of "Animal Charity Evaluators," ACE has specifically chosen to primarily focus on one niche of the animal protection movement (farmed animals), which has limited it to pre-selected organizations.
- Out of that niche, ACE has "fully reviewed" only 21 animal organizations, therefore limiting the pool of organizations even further. Out of that tiny number, only those who have a relationship to Nick Cooney (including Animal Equality as we specified previously) have been given Top Charity status. This represents a very significant conflict of interest, for it indicates neither science nor chance; but predetermination.

We make one last appeal to you to correct these critical issues:

- 1. ACE should reject and remove all recommendations for any organization related to Nick Cooney, and any/all organizations and/or individuals with which there are similar conflicts of interests.**
- 2. ACE should make a public statement acknowledging the existence of, and apologizing for the unfair and unscientific methods by which organizations were chosen.**
- 3. Hereafter offer fair, proper and timely evaluations for any animal charity (not just farmed animal charities) that makes such a request.** SHARK will not apply for such an evaluation to avoid any conflict of interest.

If ACE is unable or unwilling to do that, then the organization should return any remaining funds in its possession to donors and shut down immediately, as ACE either cannot or will not function as a legitimate, independent, and unbiased animal charity evaluator.

I want to be very clear that this is not an attack on the character of Mr. Cooney, or any individuals in ACE. I want to be equally clear that this is not an attempt by SHARK to gain anything, monetarily or otherwise from ACE, and we would refuse anything along those lines, as this would pose a conflict of interest.

Sincerely,
Steve Hindi