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June 11, 2012

Honorable Gregory S. Parker, Circuit Judge  
Third Judicial Circuit of Florida  
P.O. Box 1060  
Madison, FL 32341

**Re: *Stewart v. Caboodle Ranch, Inc.*, Case No. 2012-25-CC**

Dear Judge Parker:

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) is the oldest humane organization in the nation. Alleviating animal suffering and assisting local law enforcement in preventing animal cruelty are core tenets of the ASPCA's mission and integral to the work that, over the course of its rich 146-year history, has made the organization a leader in the field of animal welfare.

At the request of the Madison County Sheriff's Office, the ASPCA has been caring for and sheltering the nearly 700 cats and two dogs rescued from Caboodle Ranch in February 2012. Since then, the ASPCA has housed the animals at a specially outfitted temporary shelter in Jacksonville, FL, where they are receiving extensive care that includes ongoing medical services and behavioral enrichment. To date, the ASPCA has spent approximately \$1.2 million to provide for and rehabilitate the animals with the goal of placing them in permanent caring homes should the Court transfer legal custody from Caboodle Ranch to Madison County.

At the time the animals were rescued from the dire conditions at Caboodle Ranch, many were suffering from untreated medical illnesses such as upper respiratory infections, and chronic conditions such as lymphoma, blindness, polyps, and inflammatory bowel disease. The ASPCA is providing the animals with a range of essential medical services to treat the illnesses, including 24-hour emergency room monitoring and intensive care; 24-hour intravenous fluids; endoscopic procedures; blood work; feeding tubes; echocardiograms; urinalysis; radiographs; ultrasounds; and dental procedures. To date, the ASPCA has spent more than \$250,000 on veterinary care, supplies, and medications.

The ASPCA is also providing the animals with behavioral enrichment to remedy the effects of the severe neglect and lack of socialization they experienced during their time at Caboodle Ranch. This includes environmental enhancements such as perches; calming pheromones; treats

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and toys; handling enrichment for kittens; and obedience training and socialization for the two Caboodle Ranch dogs. In addition, each of the nearly 700 cats is in the process of receiving individual behavioral evaluations to assist in placing them into caring permanent homes.

In order to provide such extensive care, the ASPCA has drawn on its own extensive resources, as well as the resources of partner organizations from around the country. The ASPCA has marshaled the services of numerous outside veterinary providers, for which it has spent approximately \$100,000. Over 500 individuals (consultants, partners, staff members, and volunteers) have devoted substantial time to the care of the animals, with strong bonds frequently forming between the animals and their caretakers as a result. Facility costs and expenses for sheltering supplies—much of it essential to fighting existing disease, preventing further disease transmission, and facilitating behavioral enrichment—currently total more than \$150,000.

As these facts demonstrate, the ASPCA has devoted enormous resources to the care and rehabilitation of the Caboodle Ranch animals, with the hope that they will ultimately be placed in caring permanent homes. Indeed, the ASPCA has already developed concrete plans for achieving this goal should the Court award legal custody of the animals to Madison County.

Specifically, the ASPCA intends to hold an adoption event similar in scale to the one held in the wake of the devastating tornado that struck Joplin, MO, in 2011. Working with partners from around the country, the ASPCA's two-day adoption event in Joplin resulted in the adoption of more than 700 displaced animals. The ASPCA is confident that it can achieve similar results with the Caboodle Ranch animals by applying many of the same strategies used in Joplin and other adoption events—including the use of grassroots outreach, social networking media, paid advertising, and press coverage.

In addition, the ASPCA intends to draw on existing relationships with specialized rescue organizations to place cats with special needs in appropriate environments. Indeed, the ASPCA has had great success in the past with the adoption and placement of feral cats and cats with ongoing medical issues such as feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) and feline leukemia virus (FeLV).

In sum, the ASPCA believes that given the substantial resources expended to treat, care for and rehabilitate the Caboodle Ranch cats and dogs (responsibilities wholly abdicated by Caboodle Ranch), as well as the organization's past success in finding loving homes for scores of displaced animals, the vast majority of the Caboodle Ranch animals will be placed in environments where they will have the chance to thrive—an opportunity that Caboodle Ranch denied them.

Respectfully,



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