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IT'S HIGH TIME TO PUT HORSE CARRIAGES OUT TO PASTURE

NEW YORK CITY - On Saturday, February 29, 2020, a 12-year old horse named Aisha repeatedly collapsed over a 15-minute period in Central Park. A video of the incident, captured by a pedicab driver, shows the horse continuously falling on herself and being dragged by her handlers. Instead of calling for a veterinarian to help this horse, carriage operators tied her up with ropes, shoved her in a trailer, and took her back to the Clinton Park Stables, where she was later euthanized.

The carriage industry is saying that she had a heart attack. However, equine expert Holly Cheever, DVM, who has been involved in investigating carriage horse abuse issues for 35 years, states that, based on preliminary video footage, "this seems to be an acute collapse, and therefore may be neurological, infectious (bacterial or viral), cardiac/thromboembolic, or parasitic," but whatever the cause, "the experience for the mare must have been terrifying."

New York City's leaders are responding to widespread outrage over the incident and are calling for immediate official investigations into her handling and death.

Responsible tourism researcher Dr. Clare Weeden of the University of Brighton, UK states that tourists are becoming increasingly concerned at the commercialized use of animals in tourism, such as the horse-drawn carriages in New York City. "Such concern is likely to increase, in line with global welfare trends, and thus drive future visitor demands. To be sustainable, tourist destinations must respond proactively to these concerns, and ensure animal welfare is at the forefront of tourism policy."

Many alternative forms of tourist transportation exist, such as electric horseless carriages (e-carriages) and pedicabs, which are growing in popularity around the world as horse-drawn carriages are increasingly being banned with officials citing animal cruelty as the prime reason. Just in the last few weeks, cities in both Chile and the Dominican Republic have announced bans on horse carriages.

The Partnership to Ban Horse Carriages Worldwide calls on Mayor de Blasio, the New York City Council and officials around the world to do the right thing and enact a legislative ban on horse-drawn carriages in their cities. Improved regulations and enforcement have proven ineffective. The only solution to the problem is a complete ban on this cruel, dangerous, outdated and unnecessary practice.

All documentation is available upon request.

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