

## O'Toole pledges to eliminate animal abuse

**By Mark PavilonsEditor**

A federal Conservative government will curb all forms of animal abuse, according to Erin O'Toole, Leader of Canada's Conservatives. Using King's renowned Dog Tales Animal Sanctuary and Rescue facility as a backdrop, O'Toole said his government plans to ban puppy mills, end abuse and violence against animals, and protect the humans who care for them. The admitted dog-lover said during the pandemic, many Canadians opened up their homes to welcome a pet. In fact, over half of Canadian homes now have a pet and 90 per cent of Canadian pet owners see their pet as a family member. However, this trend has brought to light additional issues for animal welfare, including a surge in unethical breeding and animal abuse. "We also know that there is a link between cruelty to animals and violence towards people," said O'Toole. "Canada's Conservatives will add animal cruelty as an aggravating factor in domestic violence prosecutions to go after abusers who hurt their spouse by hurting their spouse's pet. We will also support pet owners fleeing violence by working with shelters to ensure that there are better options for women to leave abusive homes without having to abandon their pets." He said Canada's Conservatives will: Ban puppy mills and stop imports of animals bred inhumanely. Strengthen the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's ability to enforce current regulations and seize animals when imported under poor welfare conditions. Ban cosmetic testing on animals. Add animal cruelty as an aggravating factor in domestic violence prosecutions to go after abusers who hurt their spouse by hurting their pet. Support pet owners fleeing violence by working with the sector to ensure there are better options for women to leave abusive homes without having to abandon their pets. Provide \$10 million a year to train judges and prosecutors on the links between violence against animals and violence against people. Work with the Council of Ministers of Education to promote animal welfare education as part of a child's education on the environment and sustainability. "As someone who is proud to call our dog Wexford not only a loyal companion and best friend, but a part of our family, I will work diligently to secure the future for our furry friends," O'Toole said. O'Toole also touched on trade, the economy and climate change. He noted the Conservatives delivered their climate change plan back in April, setting specific goals. He charged that the Trudeau Liberals never made a climate change target. He said Canada should make its commitment on the Paris Accord, adding the Conservatives have "a real plan" to meet commitments and then work past them. He also supported making Canada net zero emissions by 2050 and he would work towards obtaining those objectives. He stressed the Conservatives are leading the charge for Canada's economic recovery to get the country back on track. To that end, O'Toole supports partnerships and agreements with private sector trade unions to accomplish that. The Conservatives, he said, also support lowering prices on telecommunications. He would open the Canadian market to U.S. companies to make the market more competitive. However, he would ensure there is reciprocal trade access in telecommunications.