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Greyhounds also merit protection from abuse

I thank the Daily Mail for its Sept. 29 editorial, "Dog tracks should report injury data," calling for that information to be made available to the public.

Without question, the public deserves to know how many greyhounds are being injured at West Virginia dog tracks. This data would help ensure the health and safety of greyhounds competing at these facilities by providing regulators with empirical data on the occurrence of serious injuries like broken legs.

To date, the small amount of injury data that has been made available to the public raises serious concerns.

According to records obtained from the West Virginia Racing Commission, at least 707 greyhounds were reported injured at Wheeling Island between January 2008 and September 2009.

More than one hundred of these injuries involved broken legs, and other reported injuries included dislocations, broken ankles, lacerations, fractured skulls and spinal injuries. Additionally, 62 dogs died or were euthanized during this period.

These records also document individual dogs that suffered fatal injuries. For example, on July 1, 2009, a greyhound died after being hit by the mechanical lure and suffering head trauma and seizures.

This data, however, is only from one 19-month period at one track. Because other injury data has not been made public, the public has no way of knowing whether this high level of injury is a continuing problem.

A cloud of doubt now hangs over the West Virginia dog racing industry.

It is time for dog track owners to step up, and let the public know how many greyhounds are being injured at their facilities.

For more information, go to www.GREY2KUSA.org.

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