

# Animal Welfare Advocates Expand Legal Efforts to Halt Illicit Trade in Kangaroo Parts in California

*Groups Demand Soccer Shop USA Cease Illegal Sales of Kangaroo-sourced Soccer Cleats*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Center for a Humane Economy](#) and [Animal Wellness Action](#) filed a second lawsuit today to compel compliance with California law barring the sale of kangaroo parts – this one against a second California-based sportswear retailer, alleging that the company is illegally selling kangaroo-sourced soccer cleats to consumers.



Natural disasters were hard enough on kangaroos. Do they also need to be hunted for shoes?

The legal maneuver, filed today in Superior Court in Los Angeles against Soccer Shop USA, came after the groups' investigators discovered several models of soccer cleats made from kangaroo leather for sale at the three Los Angeles-area retail outlets.

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*Kate Schultz, senior attorney,  
Center for a Humane  
Economy.*

The case follows a similar action filed in June against Soccer Warehouse, also a southern California retailer, for engaging in the same illegal sales practices. That earlier legal action is pending in Riverside County Superior Court.

The state's Penal Code Section 653o prohibits the sale of the body parts of a number of animals, including kangaroo. As recently reported by [The Los Angeles Times](#)

and also documented by prior investigations of the organizations, that law is being routinely

disregarded by athletic-wear retailers throughout the state. A number of retailers, including both Soccer Wearhouse and Soccer Shop USA, have offered soccer cleats in their stores and online made from the skins of kangaroos from companies such as Puma, Nike, and Adidas.

“We asked several times for state officials, including the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Attorney General’s office, as well as local prosecutors, to take official enforcement action to end these illegal sales,” said Kate Schultz, senior attorney for the Center for a Humane Economy. “To date, they’ve declined to do so, leaving it to us to compel enforcement of the law in light of these clear and open violations.”

The kangaroo industry in Australia engages in the largest commercial slaughter of land-based wild animals in the world. Each year, around two million wild kangaroos are gunned down in their native habitat to feed the lucrative kangaroo parts industry. Kangaroo-based cleats make up an estimated 70 percent of that demand.

As horrific as the shooting of millions of adult kangaroos is, the abuse visited on hundreds of thousands of baby kangaroos – joeys – each year is even worse. The defenseless young animals are yanked from the pouches and killed by blunt force trauma to the head after their mothers have been shot, often with a violent swing against the side of a car or other solid surface. Australia’s killing code stipulates that it is okay for the babies to linger in pain for a full three minutes before death ends their suffering.

“Synthetic soccer cleats are readily available and easily rival or outperform those made from the skins of kangaroos,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy. “A decade ago, Nike promised to do away with its kangaroo-sourced products, but it has reneged on that explicit pledge. Today, in the wake of cataclysmic fires that left billions of Australian animals dead, the mass killing of kangaroos in their native habitats continues to supply major athletic shoe retailers who can easily use an alternative fabric for all of their offerings.”



The Center for a Humane Economy has filed suit against Soccer USA based on reports the retailer is violating California law by selling kangaroo-sourced products.

The Center and Animal Wellness Action have invested tremendous resources and effort into ending the trade in kangaroo body parts, including:

- o Maintaining an ongoing investigation into the illegal sales of k-leather cleats in California
- o Producing investigative reports that document our extensive findings
- o Working both domestically and internationally to introduce legal prohibitions on the sale of kangaroo-sourced products in commerce
- o Mounting a public pressure campaign against the big soccer-cleat manufacturers.

Over the past several months, the organizations and their grassroots allies have launched protests outside several Nike flagship stores across the country, including in New York, Portland and Los Angeles, as well as overseas in Australia.

“California is one of the most lucrative markets in the United States for the soccer industry with well over 300,000 kids enrolled in youth leagues,” said Natasha Dolezal, deputy director of campaigns for the Center.

“We intend to shut down the illegal sales of these products throughout the state and continue to fight to ensure that the days of kangaroo leather cleats are ended,” she said. “These cases are just the first in several we intend to bring if retailers in the state ignore our warning and continue to break the law.”

The Center and Animal Wellness Action are represented in the case by in-house counsel and lawyers with the Kim Richman Law and Policy Group.

The Center for a Humane Economy is a non-profit organization that focuses on influencing the conduct of corporations to forge a humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both.

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that’s why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don’t. We believe helping animals helps us all.

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