



“Sue Them for All Their Worth”: Manny Rutinel Describes His Work Targeting the Meat Industry

In October 2024, Colorado State Representative Manny Rutinel addressed an audience of law students and animal rights professionals at the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) Student Convention.

During his introduction, Rutinel outlined the professional path that led him from The Humane League and the Humane Society of the United States to Yale Law School, the Animal Legal Defense Fund, Brighter Green, Earthjustice, and elected office. His description of his work at Earthjustice was especially striking.

“My whole job was to take on large meat corporations and sue them for all their worth,” Rutinel told the audience.

That statement deserves examination because it was not made during a youthful protest or in an old social media post. Rutinel made it while serving in the Colorado General Assembly and speaking to future attorneys interested in advancing animal law.

Earthjustice’s Sustainable Food and Farming Program

After earning his law degree at Yale, Rutinel joined Earthjustice as an associate attorney, working in its Sustainable Food and Farming Program. In May 2023, he coauthored an article about a legal victory involving wastewater regulations, aiming to pressure the EPA to revise pollution standards. While environmental compliance and water-quality laws are important, Rutinel’s broader record raises concerns not about law enforcement but about his derogatory view of agriculture and the influence of animal rights ideologues using litigation as a battering ram to harm agriculture. At the ALDF convention, Rutinel did not characterize his Earthjustice position as neutral regulatory work. He described it as taking on meat corporations and “suing them for all their worth.”

His Lexicon Reveals a Deep Connection to Animal Rights Ideology

Rutinel aimed to address environmental injustice and used the made-up term “factory farms.” That term comes straight from the animal rights ideologues’ lexicon. Animal rights ideologues have created these terms to deliberately malign modern agricultural practices. He promoted his Yale farm-transition project, calling animal agriculture a “horrific, exploitative industry” that harms animals, workers, farmers, communities, and consumers. He argued that large corporations underpay for their pollution, emissions, public health risks, and labor practices, and that livestock agriculture is underregulated. He proposed

regulations to make the industry pay for its external costs and introduced a carbon-market plan to remove livestock from farms as a solution.

The True End Point: Replacing Animal Operations

Rutinel's Yale proposal sought to provide carbon-offset funding to farmers who replaced livestock production with plant agriculture. Although participation was described as voluntary, the project was designed for adoption not only by voluntary offset registries but eventually by government compliance markets. Rutinel identified California, Quebec, New Zealand, Sweden, and European markets as possible future venues. He also said hundreds of millions of dollars could potentially be directed toward transitioning animal farms into plant-based farms.

Legal Pressure and Financial Incentives

The Earthjustice litigation and Yale proposal target animal agriculture with different tools: one pushes for stricter regulation of slaughterhouses, the other offers financial incentives for producers to exit the industry. Both stem from a worldview that views animal agriculture as harmful, exploitative, and poorly regulated, indicating Rutinel aimed to eliminate all livestock production. His 2024 statement about suing meat companies "for all their worth" suggests litigation is part of a broader effort to target the meat industry.

Legislative Record – HR24-1338 Is Dangerous for Agriculture

Rutinel sponsored HR24-1338 not long after he slid into the state representative seat in Colorado. It is legislation that was signed into law and allows all state departments to consider cumulative emissions impacts when considering permitting. This opens the door for animal rights ideological groups to take aim at agriculture, whether a new enterprise is being proposed, one is looking to expand, or simply renew. This piece of legislation is exactly what he coached law students to participate in when they were aiming to destroy the industry.

Pinocchio (Rutinel), Your Nose is Growing

Rutinel now says his views have evolved. He has said he eats meat and described himself as having a more nuanced understanding of agriculture. He has asked voters to evaluate his legislative record rather than statements he made when he was younger. That response may address some of his early social media remarks, which have now been conveniently deleted from Reddit. However, it does not fully answer questions about his later professional work.

We have evaluated his legislative record, and it is damning. He wasn't just a young boy when he made disparaging statements about animal agriculture. He was coaching animal rights law student's mere months before launching his campaign for Congressional District 8. His slaughterhouse litigation occurred after law school. His Earthjustice description was made in 2024. His Yale transition proposal was a professional and academic undertaking, not an offhand social media comment.

We see Pinocchio, wearing a cowboy hat, trying to deceive voters.

The statement "sue them for all their worth" must remain an important part of the record voters are being asked to consider.