

- ~~You are being asked to ban the circus. The proposed bans would prohibit elephants in the circus and outlaw the tools necessary to exhibit them safely.~~ The proposals would prevent *Ringling Bros.* from returning to Los Angeles as elephants are part of what defines *The Greatest Show On Earth*[®]. We have a herd of more than 40 Asian elephants and we perform in more than 100 North American cities each year. Coming without elephants or leaving them at the city limits just to perform in Los Angeles is neither acceptable nor feasible. Moreover, presenting elephants in a public performance setting without using the tool you are being asked to ban would be inconsistent with federal regulations requiring the animal handler to “be in direct control” during a public exhibition. See C.F.R. § 2.131.
- Not everybody agrees with the animal rights activists that this form of entertainment should be banned. In 2013 we were pleased to share our animals with the nearly 90,000 people who attended performances of *Ringling Bros.* in Los Angeles alone. That is 90,000 people who want to see elephants and other performing animals. Moreover our circus engagements have a significant positive economic impact in the city, in excess of \$1 Million, and support more than 1500 jobs not only our show but at the Staples Center.
- A circus ban, while prohibiting a lawful form of entertainment, does nothing to promote animal welfare. Federal, state and local animal welfare laws already prohibit any intentional physical abuse or ill-treatment of any animal and California has a criminal statute that specifically prohibits mistreatment of elephants.
- In July 2013 LA Animal Services conducted **twenty five (25) hours** of inspections of *Ringling Bros.* at the Staples Center. At no time did it find any violations or problems with any animal. Any claim to the contrary is factually incorrect. LAAS hired its own independent veterinarian to inspect *Ringling Bros.* last year. The doctor found no signs of abuse or improper use of guides, which was something that she was specifically tasked with checking by LAAS: “*I had checked the hooks used today and watched the handlers use them. The hooks were wrapped with only the tip exposed and light weight. No one used them harshly. As a matter of fact, they carry it more than use it and control mostly by voice and touch. The hook is used only if needed or for safety.*” A copy of the full report of Dr. Rhonda Aliah is attached. It should be noted that *Ringling Bros.* did not know Dr. Aliah prior to her arrival at the show last year on behalf of the City of Los Angeles.
- In addition to local inspectors, the care and treatment of elephants in circuses is heavily regulated by United States Department of Agriculture,

and while in California, the CA Department of Fish and Game. Between all three levels of regulation, *Ringling Bros.* had a total of 82 inspections by 18 different agencies and 44 individual inspectors during one recent twelve week tour in California. This averages out to nearly three hours spent on animal inspections every single day that *Ringling Bros.* was in California. Notwithstanding the heavy level of regulation, there was not a single claim, charge or allegations of elephant mistreatment by any of those agencies against *Ringling Bros.*

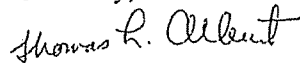
- Importantly, elephant guides or “bull hooks” are a recognized, appropriate and humane husbandry tool for managing elephants in the Elephant Husbandry Resource Guide, which reflects the accepted state-of-the-art, industry standards for the safe and humane care and management of elephants in zoos and circuses. The use of guides is accepted by the USDA and approved by the International Elephant Foundation, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the Elephant Managers Association, the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians and the American Veterinary Medical Association. The proposed ordinance seeks to outlaw the tools (such as guides) that are necessary for exhibiting elephants in live performances in order to make the exhibition itself (the real purpose of the ban) impossible to do.
- The animal rights groups paint a misleading picture and create the false impression that elephants are mistreated at *Ringling Bros.* This is not true, and it is contrary to the established regulatory presence that accompanies *Ringling Bros.* while it is in Los Angeles and touring throughout California. Responsible management of any animal involves maintaining proper control over the animal in order to ensure its safety as well as that of others. Elephants are 8,000 to 10,000 pound animals. By sheer virtue of their size, weight and strength, however, their physical movements can have consequences. Handlers must remain in control for the safety of the elephants, our employees and our patrons, and we are very proud of our outstanding safety record when it comes to working with animals. While controlling the elephants is normally done through voice command, handlers will use the guide to make contact when necessary to correct an elephant for failing to listen or engaging in potentially harmful conduct to itself or others. While it is to be done only when necessary, this is one of the recognized, intended, and proper uses of the guide. It does not injure the elephant, and it is not abuse.
- Circuses with animals are an art form steeped in tradition, rich in history and recognized as culturally significant. To prohibit licensed exhibitors from conducting their performance with any animal, including elephants, just because some vocal portion of society opposes all animals in captivity and thus prefers a different form of entertainment is censorship.

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Consumers have a right to decide for themselves if they think an animal exhibition -- whether it is at a zoo, a circus, a fair, or in a movie -- has value to them and whether they want to see human/animal interaction particularly in urban places where such interaction may be hard to find. Last July alone 90,000 circus fans said that they did want to see *Ringling Bros.* animal exhibition and came to the Staples Center to do so.

The proposal before you is an effort to inflict a political agenda that opposes elephants in captivity. The proposal targets circuses and their necessary tools in order to shut down the animal exhibitions even though the demonstrated, established track record is one of humane animal welfare. The censorship will not assist the animals, which are fine and already subject to multiple layers of regulation, but it will affirmatively hurt jobs and remove the consumer's choice to choose their own form of entertainment. We urge you to vote no and reject the proposal to ban the circus.

Sincerely,



Thomas L. Albert
Vice President