

Subject: Council File 16-1357 Prohibition on the Exhibit of Wild or Exotic Animals
From: Alyssa G <aganezer@gmail.com>
To: adam.lid@lacity.org
Date Sent: Thursday, October 10, 2019 11:30:47 AM GMT-07:00
Date Received: Thursday, October 10, 2019 11:30:49 AM GMT-07:00

Dear Adam,

Thank you for posting my response manually as we discussed on the phone. Below is the public comment of the Southwestern Herpetologists Society:

Dear Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee and Los Angeles City Council Members,

Our organization opposes the proposed Animal Exhibition Ordinance as written.

Since 1954, the Southwestern Herpetologists Society has worked to educate the general public about the roles of reptiles and amphibians in the natural world and to promote conservation of reptiles and wildlife in general. We hold that the more people understand reptiles and wildlife, and their role in the ecosystem, the more humanity will work to honor and preserve these animals and the environment.

The best way we have found to educate people and bring them to an immediate appreciation of these animals is to bring them to public events where they can be seen and even touched. I personally have seen countless individuals change their minds completely about the benefits of our reptile cohabitants of the planet through the magic of this real-life experience.

However, the draft proposal (file number 16-1357) will make these important outreach events impossible for us. While we unequivocally support the proper treatment of animals - in fact, that is part of our mission - we find this ordinance as written to be overbroad and replete with powerfully negative unintended consequences. If the city government makes it too difficult or expensive for conservation and educational groups to display what you have defined as "wild and exotic" animals, then you will be depriving the public of valuable opportunities to learn proper treatment of animals and their important role in the ecosystem. We believe the net effect would be to the detriment of animals rather than to their benefit.

We are a small nonprofit and could not possibly afford the proposed permit fees - particularly if they apply to every event we attend. We would need to cancel all of our Los Angeles city events. We are certain this same limitation would apply to other small nonprofit groups who work to educate the people of Los Angeles.

However, the permit fee is only one of several issues our organization has with this proposed legislation.

Please work with the affected stakeholders and qualified animal keepers to resolve the issues with this proposal, some of which would include the following:

- Wildlife educators
- Conservation groups
- Animal trainers
- Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)
- Zoological Association of America (ZAA)

The expertise and knowledge of people who actually work with these animals and understand their needs should be heard and valued before this legislation proceeds any further.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Alyssa Ganezer
Legislative Chair
Southwestern Herpetologists Society