

Communication from Public

Name: Jackie Navarro
Date Submitted: 02/11/2020 04:15 PM
Council File No: 16-1357
Comments for Public Posting: please enter attached letter of opposition as amatter of record. The new language in this ordinance will cause all wildlife educators and animal organizations in Los Angeles to become collateral damage



ZOOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA

February 10, 2020

Honorable David E. Ryu
Los Angeles City Council, District 4
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring Street, Rm 425
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Ordinance 16-1357 opposition

Dear Council Member Ryu,

The Zoological Association of America (ZAA) is opposed to several of the new provisions added to Ordinance 16-1357 regarding display of exotic animals by the Personnel & Animal Welfare Committee prior to its adoption last week.

ZAA is a zoological trade organization that represents professionally managed zoos, aquariums, conservation breeding facilities, wildlife conservation ranches, and education-based animal ambassador programs. ZAA also focuses on educating the next generation of wildlife management professionals around the globe; providing training in the field of husbandry, best management practices, and veterinary care. In addition, ZAA provides its members an accreditation opportunity predicated on promoting the highest standards of animal welfare, as well as public and staff safety. ZAA maintains that its accreditation criteria meet or exceed all accepted industry standards and federal requirements.

Since late in 2016 the PAW Committee of Council has been working to craft an ordinance which restricts citizens from using exotic animals essentially as decorations for various party events, while protecting educational programs that are so critical to animal conservation and zoological goals. Due to the population base and the film industry in southern-California, a large number of professionally licensed and regularly inspected businesses fulfill expectations in this area, providing these educational experiences.

The PAW committee went through several drafts over the last few years trying to establish appropriate parameters for permitting wildlife exhibitions. Before the meeting last week, it appeared that the balance among groups with opposed interests had been achieved. At the meeting, however, new language surfaced and was adopted by the PAW committee without any apparent consultation with stakeholders, perhaps due to the retirement of staff counsel who had gained applicable knowledge from the affected professional industries.

To be specific, the current draft now includes all animals. This once again removes the use of many animals vital to the professional conservation work being accomplished by many in your city. This will also make the 10 day notice period difficult if even possible for the permitting function.

A section was added last week to prohibit the presence of animals at events serving alcoholic beverages or entertaining with amplified music. It is currently common practice for functions in many venues to offer guests a glass of wine or alcoholic beverage with dinner throughout an event, especially the higher end events. This has not been a problem to date. Amplification of music is probably an ingredient of all events, fundraisers, conservation efforts, etc..., again an issue that professional providers control to accommodate the specific needs of the animal.

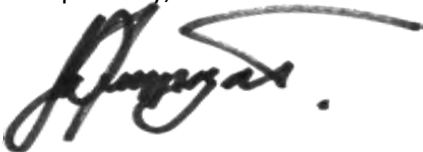
Finally, the exemption from all of the above for events related to the city's interests denotes an obvious and unfair bias that begs one to question why. If in fact this ordinance is aimed at true animal welfare and public safety, it should be enforced for all.

We have some suggestions that would achieve what council wants while still protecting our education programs. We feel:

- The alcohol and amplified music clause should be struck as it encompasses many of our conservation education events (conservation fundraisers, festivals, scout programs, museum benefits, etc as well as city related events)
- Placing "dangerous animals" back in for more restrictive permitting (as was discussed with previous counsel and animal services) accomplishes what city council intended ~ to prevent giraffes and elephants being brought to narrow streets, blocking traffic for house parties. This language will still protect the animal organizations providing conservation based and educational services with small exotics/non dangerous species. (We provided a definition of dangerous animal as well as a species list previously to the assistant city attorney, Dov Lesel and Animal Services.)
- Remove or redefine "the definition of exhibition being for the benefit of a live-audience. To the letter, such wording defines every activity accomplished by any education/conservation facility, on and off premises.

We once again ask that the authors of this ordinance grant our representatives an audience to discuss achieving what we believe the city is truly trying to achieve with this ordinance. Please allow us to participate in arriving at language that will not be detrimental to true conservation, education and animal welfare.

Respectfully,



John Seyjagat
Executive Director
Zoological Association of America

cc:

Council Member Gil Cedillo, District 1
Council Member Paul Krekorian, District 2
Council Member Bob Blumenfield, District 3
Council Member Paul Koretz, District 5
Council Member Nury Martinez, District 6
Council Member Monica Rodriguez, District 7
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Council Member Curren D. Price, Jr., District 9
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Council Member Mitch O'Farrell, District 13
Council Member Jose Huizar, District 14
Council Member Joe Buscaino, District 15
Mike Feuer, City Attorney
David Michaelson, Chief Assistant City Attorney
Valerie Flores, Senior Assistant City Attorney