

April 14, 2017

Melinda E. Eichberg  
5212 Melvin Ave., Tarzana, CA 91356

Dear Committee on Personnel and Animal Welfare,

**Opposition** to agenda item #16-1357 : Please include this letter into public record to be included in any hearing, studies, and or reports pertaining to this issue.

My name is Melinda Eichberg and I have worked professionally with exotic animals for the last 27 years. I am a Studio Animal Trainer in the motion picture industry and I am a union member of Local 399. I have worked on thousands of productions with studio animals from various movie animal companies. I am proud to be a trainer in Los Angeles because the animal companies that I work with treat their animals with such great care and love. Many of us have spent countless hours together working with and caring for the menagerie of animals.

In addition to studio work, I have been able to provide animals for educational shows, parties, and meet and greets. We (union #399 trainers) can do this skillfully and safely. We love and care for the animals and take every opportunity to answer questions and provide the public with knowledge about the animals they are encountering. Conservation starts with people who have empathy and regard for all life, which in part comes from personal experience and education. We also have brought animals to people who are terminally ill and just want to be up close and personal with our amazing animals.

Witnessing this interaction is life changing. I am still in contact with the parents of a 12 year old who passed away 10 years ago just 2 days after we brought her an assortment of animals. Many animal companies and trainers reached out to this family. Kaitlin was able to hold and interact with birds, “famous” dogs, monkey, fox, skunk, opossum and other animals. She was waiting by the window for us when we arrived. The smile on her face was so big and bright. The animals were so gentle with her. At Kaitlin’s funeral, there was a slide show and it contained pictures of her with the animals. Her father told the congregation about Kaitlin’s happiness and peace that the animals brought her. She talked about them during her last breath. Seeing animals up close is what people need. It gives people a connection whether it

be giving them peace, amazement or inspiration. Cutting animals out of peoples lives is not going to benefit animals or people. I OPPOSE the ordnance as written.

I am dedicated to the health and well being of all the animals in my care. Of course there are rules and regulations on film sets, for all cast and crew safety, including the animals. Having dedicated our entire life to these animals, they become our family and we guard their well being.

Our facilities are closely monitored and properly permitted by the USDA, US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Fish & Wildlife Service, as well as city permits.

Sincerely,

Melinda E. Eichberg

Animal Trainer

Union Local #399 member