



April 21, 2017

Dear Committee on Personnel and Animal Welfare:

OPPOSITION to agenda item #16-1357. Please enter this letter into the public record to be included in any hearings, studies and reports pertaining to this issue.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my perspective. I am Cofounder and President of Wildlife Learning Center in San Fernando Valley. I am a wildlife biologist who has studied wild and exotic animals in the field and in captivity for 30 years, and I am in opposition to this ban.

Wildlife Learning Center's Mission is to provide public education that inspires people to care for our wildlife, to care for our environment, to develop a deep interest in the natural sciences, and to give sanctuary to animals in need.

Wildlife Learning Center was founded to teach and inspire animal welfare through our internal practices and educational messages. Our staff of 16 wildlife biologists are consummate professionals dedicated to sharing their knowledge and passion for the natural world. Our knowledge of wildlife biology, zoo husbandry, and behavioral enrichment are on par with staff at AZA accredited zoos. Our veterinarian is one of only three board certified zoo veterinarians in Los Angeles County.

We have taught over 25,000 presentations to predominantly LAUSD Title I students, since 1998. Our curriculum was developed from the Common Core Science Standards created in cooperation with LAUSD teachers and Principals.

We are dedicated advocates for animal welfare and wildlife conservation. In addition to advocating for the preservation of populations of wild animals, we educate the public on spaying and neutering their pets, as well as proper pet care. On a daily basis we implement several forms of behavioral enrichment to keep the animals under our care stimulated and healthy. We care deeply about the animals under our care and apply science to the management and care of WLC's population of animals.

We are aware of Santa Monica's exotic animal ban and support their efforts to eliminate the exploitation of animals in high traffic public areas like the 3rd Street Promenade and the pier. They have eliminated inappropriate animal use, but still value life science education through outreach and experiential learning.

www.WildlifeLearningCenter.com



USDA's Animal Welfare Act strongly regulates the treatment of captive animals. April 19, 2017, USDA made an unannounced inspection to Wildlife Learning Center. The inspector was a veterinarian who conducted a thorough inspection to ensure each animal was receiving excellent care. Additionally, California Fish and Wildlife and Los Angeles Animal Services inspect WLC.

At Wildlife Learning Center we have no need for training the animals outside of veterinary behaviors. For example we are training a geriatric Eurasian lynx to give his paw so that our veterinarian can take regular blood panels. Since our educational biologists are the same people that care for the animals, the daily contact and deep bond develop the trust and relationship the animals have with their caretakers.

As I looked around the room at the City Council meeting from April 5, 2017, I can say I have been to all of the facilities of the people present at the meeting and none of them use the horrific training techniques (or negative reinforcement) that may have been used a half century ago. The vast majority of legitimate trainers utilize operant conditioning techniques that involve the use of positive reinforcement. The greatest percentage of people who choose to dedicate their lives to animals do so because they love animals and would never cause them any harm.

Many of our Title I students do not have access to the natural world and the school budgets do not allow for field trips. While we offer onsite education, LAUSD administrators consider our outreach programs to be most valuable in giving underprivileged children their first exposure to the natural world and the wonders of the sciences. Our effectiveness is proven in student's retention of the science standards. Our message to the children of attaining their dreams through a career in the sciences is echoed in each lesson we teach.

I thank you for your consideration into looking a little more closely at Wildlife Learning Center. If you are able to make the time, you will find the highest standard in animal care, education and public safety of any facility anywhere.

Thank you for the opportunity to tell you more about Wildlife Learning Center.

Sincerely,

Paul Hahn
Cofounder and President

www.WildlifeLearningCenter.com



Wildlife Learning Center

www.WildlifeLearningCenter.com

Office: 818.362.8711 • Fax: 818.362.8001 • 15981 Yarnell Street, Suite 251 • Sylmar, CA 91342 • info@wildlifelearningcenter.com