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**OPPOSITION to agenda item #16-1357**

1 message

**Lindsay Dussaigne** <ldussaigne@yahoo.com>

Fri, Apr 21, 2017 at 8:34 PM

Reply-To: Lindsay Dussaigne &lt;ldussaigne@yahoo.com&gt;

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**OPPOSITION to agenda item #16-357**

Please include this letter into public record to be included in any hearing, studies, and or reports pertaining to this issue.

My name is Lindsay Dussaigne, I am 31, and I am a student at America's Teaching Zoo at Moorpark College in Moorpark, CA and I OPPOSE THE EXOTIC ANIMAL BAN in Los Angeles. The Exotic Animal Training and Management program is a world-famous program that teaches students the most up to date methods of taking care of and training exotic animals. The school is staffed by top professionals who have had years of experience in this in this field and we are taught everything from basic vet care, nutrition, anatomy and physiology, health and safety, wildlife education, animal diversity, animals behavior and much more. I chose this career path because I can see that animals all over the world are in danger of going extinct. I want to help educate people on how they can help save these animals and our world and the best way to do that is to show them one of the animals they can help save. Something as simple as using a refillable water bottle, recycling your batteries, or riding your bike to work, can make a difference in this world. I did not choose this career for the money. Often zookeepers must work a second or sometimes third job just to make a living wage. We are hardly driving Porches and wearing Armani, we work long days including holidays and rarely take a sick day. We go into this field because we are passionate about animals and because we care about our world and making a positive impact on it.

To say that the animals we use for educational presentations are in pain, lonely, stressed, and suffer from malnutrition is completely asinine and an uneducated statement. Have you ever seen how a keeper trains a lion for a voluntary blood draw? They hardly force them or use "inhumane techniques" or they would be mauled. You cannot force a lion to do anything and that is the mindset used by good trainers when training an animal for what you call "tricks". A well-trained animal WANTS to perform the behaviors that are asked because they are always associated with something positive. America's Teaching Zoo has a mountain lion that is going to turn 17 in a few weeks. He, like many older cats, is having issues with him kidneys working properly. For this he is given subcutaneous fluids every other day. He has been trained to lay down next to the fence while his caretakers stick their hands inside the enclosure, grab his skin and poke a needle underneath his skin. He willingly participates in this procedure and has the choice to get up and walk away at any time. Forcing an animal to do something through domination and pain is a thing of the past and we need to stop thinking that that's how things are still being done.

By lumping all zoos and institutions that are not AZA accredited together and saying they are all "inhumane" and "aggressive" is ridiculous. Don't get me wrong, I do not support the person with the private collection of exotic animals on the corner that is trying to make a buck off them. As with many things in this world not everything is good. I am sure there are good councilmen and bad councilmen, those that do their job well and take pride in what they are doing, and those that are crooked and only do things for the money. That doesn't mean we get rid of the city council all together because of a few bad eggs.

Have you ever seen a child's eyes light up when they see a coati for the first time? Or when an adult learns that opossums help control the tick population so they are a really good animal to have in your back yard. People make connections to things they can see, smell and touch. Why would someone care about something they have never seen before? By having educational presentations with live animals, we are helping to save the world one person at a time.

Have you ever been to a non-AZA educational outreach facility that uses animals in educational presentations? Have you ever actually talked to the people you devote their entire lives to educating the public about the wildlife on this planet? Until you see the passion, professionalism, and dedication from these people you have no place to tell them they cannot use the animals they love and care for to help educate the public.

Snakes are reptiles, by the way. If you are trying to sound like you know what you are talking about you should probably come back to this century and get your facts straight.

By proposing this ban, you are doing a major disservice to your community and to the natural world.

Lindsay Dussaigne