

April 4, 2017

Cindi Cavallini

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 Cindi Cavallini and I have worked with exotic animals for more than 30 years. I currently work at a privately owned zoo that specializes in educational outreach, specializing in offsite school, library, fair and birthday party visits. I currently care for over 200 animals and 100 different species and I can tell you with absolute certainty that the impact we have on conservation by providing the programs that we do is incomparable to anything these children would experience anywhere else.. Regardless of the venue, be it at a school, library or backyard birthday party our conservation message is always the same. We provide a safe, up close and hands on opportunity for children to experience and learn about exotic animals that they would not experience from visiting a zoo. In fact, most children in the Los Angeles area can not afford a visit to your fine zoo, being that admission is \$20 for adults and \$15 for children, that is a lot of money for just a family of four! Our programs are in fact often sponsored by the city of Los Angeles library system and provide a free experience for all families, regardless of their income, as well as encourage children to go to the library and make it a safe and enjoyable place to be.

Unfortunately, the proposed ordinance, takes the opposite stance, advocating that the only acceptable means of providing this experience is from an AZA accredited zoo. Simply because a facility can not afford to become accredited or is too small to apply, does not make it any less professional or important. By outlawing our ability to visit the locations we visit and lumping us together with any fly by night animal owner is unfair. This ordinance would put up roadblocks in our ability to teach and promote our conservation message that we provide to over 30,000 students and more than 2 million fair goers every year!

As a professional charged with ensuring the well-being of the animals in my care, I can tell you that the travel and experiences of our animals is a positive one. As professionals we are trained and experienced in recognizing any signs of stress, and if an animal in our care were to experience stress it would be removed immediately from exhibit. Our facility is closely monitored at every level from federal, including USDA/APHIS, US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Fish & Wildlife Service, to local law enforcement and animal welfare organizations. Moreover, all of our animals are under a veterinarian's care (which by law they all must be to continue being USDA regulated) and has the protection of that veterinarian himself, because they must uphold their oath and report any problems with our animals they suspect.

When I care for the 200 different species I am charged with, I must rely on the safe and appropriate handling and training I have learned, from my college degree and ongoing learning, to my 30 years of experience. An animal that is tractable and well trained has less stress when having a medical procedure, interacting with the public, during training sessions and in activities overall. Having a calm, willing participant animal is a happy animal when it comes to outreach.

I urge you not to accept at face value the mischaracterizations of this proposed ordinance that will limit our ability to instill the lifetime of respect and caring we provide to children and adults alike, who meet our animals every day.

Sincerely,  
Cindi Cavallini

Professional member of Zoological Association of America  
Professional member of American Association of Zoo Keepers  
Co-chair of Animal Welfare Committee for Circus Fans of American  
American Association of Zoo Keepers International Outreach Committee member  
Graduate of Moorpark College Institute for Wild and Exotic Animal Studies