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16-1357 Exotics in Entertainment Ban- ok to post

1 message

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Councilmembers,

Please do what you can to assure that responsible exotic pet owners and educators are carefully and fully exempted from the recent ban on exotics for entertainment (16-1357). Standards should be written including the input of professional keepers, not just activists whose aim is to ban exotics outright by amending over and over for the next decade. Further, without careful language, there is too much room for confusion on the ground with the officers charged with this enforcement. I have seen simple measures such as the ban on baby slider turtles for sale get terribly confused and enforced incorrectly.

*Simply adding USDA, USFWS, and CDFW permitted facilities is a good start, but doesn't cover many non-permitted exotics like birds and harmless reptiles. (This Also needs USDA-PAHIS exemptions)

*The amendment should include standards of appropriate behavior, or at least ban specific animals and behaviors. Saying "birthday parties" is too broad. Surely there is a difference between a few harmless snakes and lizards sitting contentedly in a lap at a child's birthday party in Encino vs. a Tiger in the Hollywood Hills?

*Re: "tricks" animals are "forced to perform" as a measurement of responsibility. Let it be clearly known- training is not intrinsically harmful to animals. (Refer to the AZA standards on Enrichment and Training.) This is a very concerning topic to keeper professionals such as myself, because good training is considered a staple of solid care and management, as well as animal psychological well-being. Sometimes "training" can appear to be "tricks" to the untrained eye. Surely you can use professional input to find language that excludes proper, responsible training which is a part of professional husbandry.

If you use the expertise of professional keepers, and wildlife veterinarians, you can make this work for human and animal alike. We don't need/want to end up like Vancouver and San Francisco- that legislation is too broad, and targets the whole barrel rather than the few rotten apples. Let's be smarter!

Thank you,

Leslie Gordon

18 Year professional animal keeper and educator