

April 12, 2017

Dear Committee on Personnel and Animal Welfare,

I am writing to you in regards to the proposed **Exotic Animal Ban**, agenda item 16-1357, in Los Angeles. Please put this letter into public record to be included in any hearings, studies, and or reports pertaining to this issue.

I have been a studio animal trainer since December 1975 and have been running my own company, Critters of the Cinema, since June, 1981. Although Critters doesn't do a lot of exotic animal work and don't do much with the public, we have done a number of such projects.

There is one project that has always stood out in my mind. We had a petting zoo, with goats, sheep, a small cow, rabbits, chickens and ducks set up in a part of the city, that most people would call "the inner city". I was standing near a small boy who was staring in obvious awe at, for all this, a red chicken. His eyes and mouth were wide open. He noticed me and asked, in a voice full of amazement, "Is that a chicken?" "Yes that is a chicken that is what you eat at Church's." I replied. "Can I see it?" he inquired. I knew he meant go into the zoo and pet it. "Of course you can," I replied and with a nod from his mom I escorted him into the zoo. He made a bee-line for his chicken, sat on the ground, gathered it into his lap and started petting and cooed to it quietly. "You are so pretty, so soft, and even a funny little thing", he then whispered into the chicken's ear, "I'm sorry, I will never, never, ever eat any of your friends again" then he kissed the bird on its head and smiled up at his mom and me.

Another thing about stopping things like a petting zoo or pony rides, I have a friend, a single mother with four children under ten, she supports all of them with her petting zoo/pony ride business. Without that, she will have to become a "ward of the state" and go on welfare. I doubt very much that she is the only person in this position.

It is this and so many other things you will deprive the public from experiencing if your ban goes through because we all know, if the petting zoos aren't directly affected by this ban, they will be as you expand the ban, which I have no doubt will be next.

I also have little doubt that the next step will be to try and ban all exotic animals from working in film industry inside the city of Los Angeles. That move would affect the city and your constituents in many ways, most of them financial. All that will do is force production people to take their shows out of LA City and they don't have to go far. They can set up their offices at the studios in Burbank or Culver City. They can spend their millions in cities like Pasadena, Glendale, Santa Monica, and many other incorporated cities near the City of Los Angeles. The millions they spend on office space, personnel, restaurants, hotels, and so many other services will be spent not in the City of Los

Angeles, where it would not benefit LA businesses but to the businesses in those other communities as well as the taxes involved with these transactions.

As far as public safety and to the best of my knowledge, in the history of the film industry; there has never been a serious injury or death as a result of these animals work or contact with the public, including film crews. Not once in the long history of animal work within the City of Los Angeles. Why? Because the animal trainers you are attempting to hinder are the tops in the field and have that incredible safety record.

Many trainers, who make a living working with these wonderful critters, also protect crews working as rattlesnake safety personnel on film sets. These are folks highly qualified to safely remove rattlers from the areas productions are working in, notably the foothills within the city including Griffith Park and the Hollywood Hills. Without the income from doing both tasks, these trainers may have to find work in other fields leaving the film crew unprotected by high quality snake handlers. I don't believe that would be good for either your constituents or the industry as a whole.

For the reasons stated above and many others, I ask you to reject this ban so all your constituents to benefit from our presence.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert Bloch', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and fluid.

Robert Bloch
Critters of the Cinema