



Adam Lid <adam.lid@lacity.org>

Opposition to agenda item #16-1357

1 message

Gary Wilson <garygwhiz@me.com>

Mon, Apr 24, 2017 at 5:34 PM

To: Adam.Lid@lacity.org

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.

Dear Councilman Lid:

The motivation for this motion is based on false assumptions. While animals should not be "treated as objects or toys," this is not due to people becoming desensitized from seeing live animal performances. On the contrary, scientific studies have shown that the opportunity to see live animals is essential for people, especially children, to develop a deep appreciation for animals. An ordinance to, as the motion states, "prohibit the exhibition of wild or exotic animals for entertainment or amusement..." would prevent legitimate activities involving live animals that are vital to save the many animal species which are threatened by human actions.

This motion states that "to get animals to perform 'tricks' and other acts unnatural to them, handlers have been repeatedly shown to use inhumane training techniques." This statement demonstrates a lack of awareness of the many and extensive changes that have developed in the world of behavior modification. It reflects a level of ignorance about the practice of positive reinforcement training that, unfortunately, is all too common in people who are not knowledgeable about this humane technology that is used to improve the welfare of both animals and humans.

Federal laws and regulations such as the Animal Welfare Act and the Migratory Bird Act as well as state Fish and Wildlife laws and regulations are already in place to protect animals. These laws and regulations are enforced by USDA, US Fish and Wildlife, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. If the Los Angeles City Council feels that violations of these laws and regulations are occurring in the city of Los Angeles, they should do whatever they can to increase funding for the agencies that enforce these laws and regulations. There are ample protections for animals, but these agencies could be funded better to improve enforcement efforts. In contrast, the proposed ordinance would penalize law-abiding individuals instead of targeting the bad actors who are operating in violation of the law.

I am sure that you and your fellow councilmen care about animals. I do too and I have dedicated my life to improving the welfare of animals, both those in the wild and those under human care. I know many professional animal caregivers who would be prevented by this misguided ordinance from sharing their passion for all wildlife and inspiring people to take the actions needed to save them. These professionals abide by the extensive laws and regulations protecting animals under human care. While the motion suggests that the proposed ordinance would make "exceptions for accredited zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, legitimate filming purposes, research facilities, and legitimate conservation-related programs or presentations," it would eliminate many organizations that are doing humane and legal work with wild and exotic animals. Wild and exotic animals and wild places are disappearing rapidly. They need all the help they can get. Limiting who can help them, as this ordinance would do, is not in their best interest.

I urge you to vote no on this motion.

Sincerely,
Gary L. Wilson