

RE: OPPOSITION to agenda item #161357: April 5, 2017

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

Dear Committee on Personnel and Animal Welfare,

My name is MandyLi May and I am an animal trainer and caretaker. I have been a trainer in the entertainment industry for a little over 3 years, but have cared for/worked with/rehabilitated wild and exotic animals for over 15 years. And I am OPPOSED to agenda item #161357.

I started my work with wild and exotic animals doing rehabilitation and release for native raptors. We were funded entirely by donations, and our main source of income/donations came from our outreach programs which helped people see firsthand about their lives, habitat, and how human behavior affects them. If this ban is approved, many of these facilities will be unable to remain operational, which could lead to many more wild animals dying because they can't get the care they need. One of many possible consequence of this type of agenda.

I now work at Benay's Birds and Animals as a trainer and caretaker. Many of our animals are rescues, who would have been euthanized if we had not stepped in and given them a better life. We give all of our animals the level of care and attention that is best for them. They get enrichment every day, interaction with people, a balanced nutritional diets, and excellent veterinary care. To address some of the concerns in the Motion, if our animals are lonely, they are put with companions; if they come to us malnourished, we work with a team of veterinarians to nurse them back to health and ensure they are getting the proper nutrition; and we avoid the "overwhelming stress of lengthy confinement" through training and making sure our animals feel safe and comfortable at all times.

To the note in the Motion that "the use of wild or exotic animals...has desensitized generations of people and taught our children that it is perfectly acceptable to treat wild and exotic animals as objects or toys", I would argue that one of the main reasons people even care about animals is because of their early exposure to them, either through outreach, circuses, television, or movies. I know my own personal connection with animals developed in elementary school when educational animal shows would come in. I felt a much deeper connection being able to see these animals up close and learn about them than I did simply visiting them in a zoo. If a zoo was my only opportunity to ever see these animals, I don't think I would have ever thought to enter into the animal field or make animal and environmental conservation such a large part of my life.

And as for the "aggressive" animal handlers on public sidewalks and parks, if they are breaking the law (which it sounds to me like they are), then punish them. Don't punish all of us for their actions. Don't punish the people who are highly regulated, permitted, and act legally, responsibly, and safely. Don't punish the people who care for their animals' safety, who care for the public's safety, and who would

never do anything to jeopardize it. Would you take away everyone's cars because a small percentage drive recklessly and put everyone on the road at risk?

This ban will have far reaching effects that you might not be aware. You are depriving children the opportunity to develop a connection and understanding of animals that cannot be obtained any other way. Animal companies may need to close, meaning that people will lose jobs, the city will lose tax revenue, and the supporting businesses that provide veterinary care, food, building materials, etc. will also suffer. The animals that were taken care of by the businesses that have to close will suffer, either having to be sent to 'sanctuaries' where they will not get the level of care and attention they did before, or have to be euthanized because there's no room for them anywhere. Conservation and rehabilitation efforts will suffer as the donations dry up because they cannot get the exposure they once could through outreach and open houses. Please, on behalf of the environment, the animals, and the people who actually truly love and care for them, do NOT approve this ban.

MandyLi May
Ventura, CA
4/14/17