



April 3, 2017

Council Member David Ryu  
Los Angeles City Hall,  
Room 425 200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Council File:16-1357

Prohibition on the Exhibit of Wild or Exotic Animals for Entertainment or Amusement

Dear Council Member Ryu,

I am writing to you about the upcoming discussion/decision on the use of wild or exotic animals in your city. My job for the past 15 years has been working with exotic cats. Our facility houses cats that have come from many varying circumstances. (orphaned in the wild, re-homed from zoos who no longer want the cats, several from animal trainers and some from breeders). All of the cats who were "re-homed" with us were in good condition and well cared for before coming to us. They will live their lives out at Project Survival and are loved and well cared for.

Our facility is inspected 4 times yearly by USDA and APHIS. Their inspector, (who also happens to be a veterinarian) inspects the cats, the enclosures, the diets, our paperwork, our emergency plans, our charts, and much more. Although we have not had any "write-ups" , if something is found that needs to be attended to, we must comply. The welfare of the animals is thoroughly monitored.

We are also inspected by California Fish and Wildlife yearly. They also walk through the facility and do careful inspections. Also, the state of California already has very strict laws and regulations in place when taking exotic cats out in public. The Haley Act was enacted back in 2007 which prohibits direct public contact with big cats. As it stands now, to work in Los Angeles we must abide by L.A. Animal Services permit requirements which are stringent. They require us to provide:

- Health Certificate
- Liability Insurance
- Public Safety Plan
- Details of the event
- Emergency Veterinarian information
- Description of transportation of animals

Our facility is open to the public and we give guided tours throughout the week. Our education department has both on-site classroom and a traveling class. Our ambassador cats visit schools across the central valley throughout the year. The classes are invited to participate in conservation programs for endangered cat species by doing a "Coins for Cats" campaign. The money collected is distributed to the cat project chosen by the children. (Snow Leopard Conservancy, Cheetah Conservation Botswana, Fishing Cat Conservancy etc. etc.). This is an unique learning experience for the students and teachers.

In the past, we have been to Los Angeles and other parts of southern California with some of our cats. When talk shows host Animal Planet celebrities, National Geographic etc., our cubs have been education ambassadors. Our Cheetahs are ambassadors for fund raising events for Dr. Laurie Marker, Rebecca Klein, Mary Wykstra and more. If we do a photo shoot, a member of Animal Humane is there to monitor the welfare of the animals.

Children in schools are amazed to see a Cheetah or other small exotic cat. They are inspired to listen and learn. These animals support education and conservation goals. They are loved and cared for. They are not abused.

**Project Survival – Project Survival’s Cat Haven – Project Survival’s Cheetah Center**

**38257 E. Kings Canyon Rd., Dunlap, CA 93621      559-338-3216**

**[www.cathaven.com](http://www.cathaven.com)   [www.cheetahcenter.com](http://www.cheetahcenter.com)**



It is important to have some regulations in place- when exotic animals are brought to Los Angeles, the facility that is responsible should:

- Have a USDA license
- Be inspected by California Fish and Wildlife
- Have current veterinary health certificates
- Have proof of liability insurance
- Have a safety plan
- Have emergency Veterinarian
- A member of Animal Humane to monitor welfare of the animals

There are many responsible organizations that take wonderful care of their animals and are able to share the beauty and inspire people to learn, take action and just enjoy. With the proper regulations in place, Los Angeles does not need to ban exotic animals. Please do not eliminate the opportunity for people, especially children to be able to have an unique learning experience. Regulate to stop bad people from doing bad things with animals but please don't stop good people who care deeply for their animals and do wonderful things. Thank you for taking the time to consider the above.

Sincerely,

Wendy Debbas  
President Project Survival