

April 13, 2017
Ute Braun
Santa Clarita

Dear Committee on Personnel and Animal Welfare

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.

My name is Ute Braun and I have worked in the animal industry for almost 4 years. I am a studio animal trainer and I work for an accredited company that has supplied animals for the motion picture industry for over 30 years. In addition to studio work, we also provide animals for special events, presentations, outreach, etc.

I started my work with animals volunteering at wildlife sanctuaries and wildlife rehabilitation centers and went on to get a degree in Exotic Animal Training and Management from Moorpark College. I can speak on behalf of everyone in the animal industry when I say that we LOVE the animals we work with. For the last 4 years I have been taking care of animals in extreme heat, rain, cold weather on weekends and Holidays. We as animal trainers and keepers are on 24 hour stand by 365 days a year and are often not able to spend Holidays with family and friends to take care of our animals. We DO NOT ABUSE our animals. We love them and mourn them when we lose one just as anyone would with their dog or cat.

All of our animals are cared for with the upmost respect. We give them a nutritious diet for them to thrive on, provide them with behavioral enrichment, train them with behaviors to stimulate their minds, exercise them to ensure that they are in good physical health. We care for the physical and psychological well being of our animals. Our facility is properly permitted by USDA, US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as city permits. When we take our animals to events, we establish rules and boundaries to assure the safety of the public and the animals. They are never left unsupervised or put in a dangerous situation.

A majority of animals used for outreach and education are rescues from rehabilitation centers that can't be released into the wild and many of our facilities get contacted by Fish and Wildlife if they have animals in need of a home as in for example confiscated illegal pets or animals from illegal animal trafficking.

Taking these animals to private events and educational presentations helps teach people of all ages about them and their environment and the threads they are currently facing and why they are not meant to be pets and need to be taken care of by trained animal professionals. People love what they know and nothing can replace a child in a school seeing an actual live animal up close and personal with a chance to ask questions. I am writing to you as a concerned fellow citizen. I believe that this ban will jeopardize an important form of education for our future generations. Studies have shown that people learn best in a hands-on environment, whether it takes place at a school or a private event.

Passing this ban will not help any animals or make the city safer but only feed into the agenda of a minority group of people that want no animals in captivity including everyone's pet. I stand in strong opposition to this ban and urge you to do the same.

Sincerely Ute Braun

