



Adam Lid &lt;adam.lid@lacity.org&gt;

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**OPPOSITION to the agenda item #16-1357**

1 message

**Xela Miller** <xmiller@smith.edu>

Tue, Apr 25, 2017 at 12:05 AM

To: Adam.Lid@lacity.org

Cc: David.ryu@lacity.org, Paul.koretz@lacity.org

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

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you to oppose the agenda item that will ban groups other than zoos and aquariums from using exotic animals in any manner, including outreach and education.

There are so many non-profit groups and private carers that participate in many events, with the intent of educating the public on exotic animals. These events contribute significantly to the conservation of many of these animals that the public probably does not know much about. Conservation always begins with education: What is this animal? How does it contribute to its ecosystem? What could the loss of this species mean for its ecosystem in the future (which is not a positive outcome)?

So many of the professionals not associated with the AZA present their exotic animals to children at their schools, to the families in the local community- to anyone, really. People in this industry strive to increase the amount of respect the public has for exotic animals that face so many issues like deforestation, hunting, collision with vehicles, diseases- a lot of issues that are human-derived. The public should be able to see an exotic animal and be given the opportunity to interact with it in a safe and respectful way because this forms a positive connection with the animals. It is a fact that most of the public will only be inclined to help animals that they have seen or that they know about, rather than some obscure species name that they have no knowledge of and no connection to. Animals are such an important part of our world, but it is amazing how many people have not been exposed to certain animals, especially exotics. So, outreach programs and educational shows/tours form this bridge and initiate more compassion and more desire to help these animals in any way they can.

A lot of these experiences with the public do plant the seed that makes people want to contribute to conservation measures, including young students wanting to pursue a career in a field related to the care and education on exotic animals. Completely banning the use of exotic animals by these credible professionals will only disadvantage all of the exotic species in need, all of the species in danger of extinction.

In addition, a lot of the events and experiences these groups and people set up with their animals are volunteer based and are very accessible to everyone, no matter any demographics. Unfortunately, there are many low-income families that may not be able to afford going to a zoo or aquarium in order to learn about these wonderful animals. Banning the use of exotic animals aside from the AZA would destroy a lot of outreach efforts that have been building over so many years. Especially with climate change on the rise, drastically changing the climate and in turn the habitats some animals call home, education and outreach is ESSENTIAL to our efforts as humans to rectify a lot of the damage we have caused this planet and the animals that we live alongside.

As a student who has so much compassion for animals and plans to pursue a career in the care of native and exotic wild animals, I understand the need to ensure that the animals are treated properly and are not in any situations that can harm them in any way. Luckily, a lot of the organizations and independent educators know about the animals in their care and have the animals' well-being at the fore-front of their mind.

If possible, please find a way to allow the continuation of education and outreach programs and events using exotic animals. It is so important, not just to those in the industry, but also the community as a whole, and ultimately the well-being of the environment.

Thank you for your time,  
Xela Miller

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Xela Miller

4/25/2017

City of Los Angeles Mail - OPPOSITION to the agenda item #16-1357

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