

ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

VIA EMAIL

June 4, 2012

Councilmember Paul Koretz  
Chairman  
Personnel & Animal Welfare Committee  
Los Angeles City Council  
City Hall  
200 N Spring Street, Rm 440  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmember Koretz:

Feld Entertainment, Inc. is the world's leading producer of live family entertainment spectacles, which include *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey® Circus*, *Disney On Ice*, *Disney Live!* and *Feld Motor Sports®*. We are contacting you with an urgent request regarding a report which is now disclosed on the agenda for the Committee's June 5 meeting. The report endorses a proposed ban of the elephant husbandry tools necessary for free contact handling – the tools that are necessary for *Ringling Bros.* to perform.

We must respectfully protest our omission from participating in the process that has led to this recommendation, and also to what is apparently a purposeful effort to limit any notice to us such that we could comment on it. For that reason we are requesting that consideration of the report be continued from tomorrow, June 5, 2012, to a later date so that *Ringling Bros.* and the other exhibitors who are targeted by it may have at least an opportunity to address the Committee.

This is an extremely serious matter that threatens the circus industry, and more importantly, does not enhance or increase elephant welfare or protection. *Ringling Bros.* is the largest traveling exhibitor with elephants. We visit Los Angeles every year and have done so since at least 1919. Each year we obtain a permit from and are subject to inspection by Animal Services. Officers from the Department attend our elephant walks to and from the arena and are present during every performance. In every case we have used the guide throughout the duration of our stays without incident or complaint from the Department. We have always sought to work cooperatively with the Department and participated constructively in the recent revision of the Department's regulations regarding animal exhibitions. Thus, we are extremely disappointed that

neither the Department nor the Board of Animal Services sought our input prior to finalizing this report. By providing us with 24-hours notice through publication of tomorrow's Committee agenda, they have effectively made it impossible for us to attend or adequately address the issues before the Committee. As a result, the Committee will be acting on incomplete and inaccurate information that is slanted in favor of animal rights activists and in some instances factually incorrect or misleading.

The proposed ban would prevent *Ringling Bros.* from performing in Los Angeles by prohibiting the use of a common elephant husbandry tool called a "guide." A more antiquated term for this tool is "bullhook" and the misinformation about the use of this tool is central to the urgent issue we want to address with you. The guide is recognized and accepted as an appropriate and humane tool for handling elephants by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department of Fish and Game, the International Elephant Foundation, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and the Elephant Managers Association, among others. This is omitted entirely from the Department's report.

Furthermore, the care and treatment of elephants in circuses is already closely regulated on multiple levels. All circuses with elephants are required to be licensed annually by the USDA and are open to regular, unannounced inspections seven days a week. USDA frequently inspects licensed exhibitors, including *Ringling Bros.*, to ensure they comply with the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act, the same federal law that governs zoos. In California, we must also obtain a permit from and are inspected by the Department of Fish and Game, and that agency has its own extensive regulations in place. Finally, California is the only state that has a statute in place that specifically prohibits the use of any instrument, not just a bullhook, to inflict physical injury on an elephant.

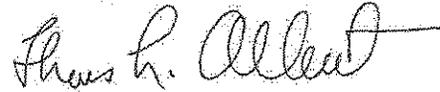
The question of how elephants are managed and cared for triggers strong and divergent opinions. The guide is not only humane, but it is essential for free contact handling of elephants, which is the method used in all circuses and most zoos. **Without this tool no one can have elephants in a circus and there are no alternatives for circuses.** The animal rights activists seek to encourage the passage of "bullhook bans" in order to eliminate circuses and prevent the exhibition of elephants. We strongly disagree and so do our millions of fans and supporters.

Circuses are lawful and licensed exhibitors and the effort to convert them into criminal conduct is nothing less than an attempt at illegal censorship. Each year we entertain an average of **86,000** people at our shows in Staples Center. That is **86,000** people who want to see our elephants and other animals up close in a performance setting, which is a unique and treasured experience. Yet if the recommendations in this report are adopted they will be denied that opportunity.

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We are eager to address any questions you may have about our company, our circus and the care and handling of our elephants. Thank you for your attention to this very important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas L. Albert", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas L. Albert  
Vice President – Government Relations

Cc: Councilmember Alarcon  
Councilmember Zine  
Maria Elena Durazo, LA County Federation of Labor  
Ron Herraray, Teamsters District Council  
Tim Leiweke, AEG