



CITIZENS FOR  
LOS ANGELES  
WILDLIFE

PO Box 50003 Studio City, CA 91614  
805-225-5766 info@clawonline.org www.clawonline.org

December 10, 2015

VIA EMAIL

Nicholas Greif  
Director of Policy & Legislation  
Office of Councilmember David Ryu  
4<sup>th</sup> District, City of Los Angeles

RE: Exotic Animal Permits for Private Events

Dear Nicholas,

Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife (CLAW) is a non-profit advocacy environmental organization concerned with the well being of wildlife and wildlife open space habitat for the City of Los Angeles and beyond. A citizenry of more than 3,000 individuals now supports our organization and our multiple projects to protect and restore the biodiversity of LA City, County, California and beyond.

Always of concern to us are discussions of LA City's best practices in regards to ethical treatment of ALL animals including captive native and exotic animals. We are writing to you to ask that you consider the real need for meaningful legislation to further regulate the "use" of exotic animals for education and exhibition within the Los Angeles city limits. We ask that you keep in mind that pursuing a full ban of exotic animal exhibition permits could have a severely negative impact, including but not limited to the further exploitation and trade of exotic animals on the black market. However, we feel strongly that allowing the exhibition of exotic animals for the purposes of entertainment at private events or parties, particularly those held at private residences or public spaces, without stringent guidelines and oversight, puts at risk both the well-being and the safety of the animal(s) and the public.

CLAW does not endorse harboring or use of wild or exotic animals in a manner that is exploitative and/or strictly for monetary gain, or in a way that is detrimental to that animal's well-being, and we are further concerned that the line between "education" and "entertainment" can and has become murky. There appears to be a lack of oversight regarding the exotic animal exhibition permits, which can be granted for one year, as well as the lack of monitoring at individual events and functions where these animals are being displayed. Oversight of events would help to determine:

- If the animals being displayed are being treated ethically and exhibited without excessive stress.
- If the conditions under which they are traveling and being exhibited are safe for both the animals and the public.
- Whether the safety of the surrounding neighborhood is at low to high risk due to the presence of certain species of animal (i.e. large carnivores, great apes, venomous reptiles, pachyderms, etc.)

Under the current provisions, it is possible that individuals or organizations can obtain animal exhibition permits at private residences under the claim they are utilizing exotic animals for the purposes of educating the public and providing that animal with an adequate home, but really are using the animal strictly for the purpose of monetary and personal gain, and in some cases, neglecting or abusing the animal(s). This can be detrimental to the animal, as well as the public, and we ask that you consider the need for regulation on this issue.

We hope that any regulation and any permit discussion in the City of LA includes the following:

- Permits requirements should be detailed and not be perfunctory;
- Requirements should include a credentialed or licensed “wildlife” expert on site;
- Fees should be significant enough to pay for assurance of best practices;
- Permit violations should be enforced to the fullest extent of the law.

Very truly yours,



Alison Simard  
Chair, Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife

Cc's:

Councilmember David Ryu,  
Councilmember Paul Koretz  
Councilmember Harris-Dawson  
Brenda Barnett, Department of Animal Services  
Jacqueline Lawson, Office of the City Attorney