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

Dear Councilmember David Ryu,

On behalf of Lions Tigers & Bears (LTB), I am writing to support a ban on the use of wild or exotic animals for entertainment in Los Angeles, including in circuses, public exhibition and at private events. Since 2003, LTB has played an active role in the rescue of exotic animals exploited by private owners, roadside zoos, and in the entertainment industry. Our sanctuary, accredited by the American Sanctuary Association, Global Federation of Sanctuaries, and a member of the Better Business Bureau, has criss-crossed this country many times to rescue and re-home exotic animals used for entertainment. Our rescue team have witnessed first-hand the heart-breaking abuses that are prominent in the exotic animal entertainment industry. Exotic and wild animals used for entertainment are deprived of even the minimum conditions necessary to meet their physical, psychological, and social needs. Many of these animals live their lives without ever feeling grass or dirt underneath their paws. They are kept in small cages where they often only have just enough room to stand up and turn around. Albert, a grizzly bear that we rescued from these deplorable conditions, developed neurological problems because he was kept in a small cage for the first half of his life. He now walks with a limp and needs to use a ramp to get in and out of his bedroom because he was deprived of space and exercise during the important years of his development.

In addition to providing inadequate living conditions, exotic and wild animal trainers working in the entertainment industry often use cruel training methods to elicit the desired behaviors from the animals they are training. Not only are these methods cruel and dangerous for the animals, they also endanger the trainer that is using them. And because these trainers and exotic and wild animal owners often move from place to place, it is difficult to monitor their practices and ensure proper oversight of the animals' welfare.

The use of wild and exotic animals for entertainment is also a threat to public safety. Wild animals are dangerous and unpredictable. A recent incident involving a famous tiger trainer in a Las Vegas show was a tragic reminder that even the most highly trained exotic animal can and will act on its wild, primal instincts. These wild and exotic animals used for entertainment are typically kept in close proximity to the public, often times without sufficient protective barriers. And, in addition to the obvious danger of these animals physically hurting people, keeping these animals in close proximity to the public also increases the chance of transmission of zoonotic diseases from animals to humans.

In the United States, more than sixty localities in the U.S. regulate the use of wild animals for entertainment purposes, with San Francisco being the largest city to completely prohibit the use of these animals for entertainment. I urge the City of Los Angeles to continue to embrace its role as a leader in the protection of wild and exotic animals by banning the use of them for entertainment in circuses, public exhibition and at private events. I appreciate the opportunity to offer these comments and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bobbi Brink, Founder/Director
Lions Tigers & Bears