



Adam Lid <adam.lid@lacity.org>

Opposition to Agenda Item 16-1537 (Prohibition re: Exotic Animals) as Written1 message

Kathleen Duke <kdukelow@gmail.com>

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To: Adam.Lid@lacity.org, david.ryu@lacity.org, paul.koretz@lacity.org, Councilmember.Englander@lacity.org

Gentlemen,

I understand that the Los Angeles City Council will be voting on a proposed law tomorrow entitled “Prohibition on the Exhibit of Wild or Exotic Animals for Entertainment or Amusement” that is targeted at preventing people who display exotic animals for a profit from abusing and neglecting their exotic animals.

I am very concerned about the vague language in the law as well as the extremely ruled effort to put this matter to a vote without an opportunity for public comment that would give the City Council a better understanding of the public impact of the law as written. I am also concerned that this law, as written, will interfere with valuable educational presentations made by non-profit organizations to school children in our community.

I am no expert on this law, but my understanding is that it excludes all “legitimate filming purposes, research facilities, and legitimate conservation related programs or presentations.” What are “conservation related programs or presentations” and what makes them “legitimate?” How are organizations supposed to know whether or not they are affected by this law?

I am a long-time resident of Los Angeles currently living in Chatsworth (in the San Fernando Valley). I have 2 school aged children (now 14 and 17) who have gone to public school here since kindergarten and have benefited from local non-profit organizations who give presentations to children about wildlife. In particular, my kids have enjoyed and benefited from presentations provided by the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains and the Santa Susanna Mountain Parks Association. These organizations have trained volunteer docents who take the kids on hikes in the Santa Susana Mountain Pass State Historic Park in and around Chatsworth and talk to them about our local geological history and about local plant and animal life. They teach the kids to respect the environment, and give them a bit of hands-on, out-in-nature education. How many opportunities does a kid in Los Angeles have to touch a snake in safe, supervised conditions, with an explanation

about its habitat and how it fits into the circle of local animal life? Not many. Not is Los Angeles anyway.

Some of the docents are my neighbors who are very knowledgeable and caring people who share their expertise and compassion for our local wildlife and the environment in a way that regular school teachers cannot. Does this law prevent them from showing live animals to our kids? The way the law is currently written, it is not clear.

Please consider postponing a vote on this law until local non-profit organization and families have an opportunity to meaningfully comment on the law, and please consider amending the law as currently written to exclude education-related programs or presentations, and perhaps all 501(c)(3) charitable organizations.

I get that the City Council is under a lot of pressure to respond to the persistent calls to action of animal rights groups that no doubt make your decision-making process very challenging at times. But please don't forget that you also represent LA's children, and their interests. Please take the time to listen to the opinions of the people who care about our kids and give their views, and mine, careful consideration in your upcoming decision-making on the proposed new law.

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

Thank you for your service to our community,

Kathleen A. Duke

A mom in Chatsworth

Council District 12

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