



Adam Lid <adam.lid@lacity.org>

OPPOSITION to agenda item #16-1357: *Please include this letter into public record to be included in any hearing, studies, and or reports pertaining to this issue*

1 message

Cheryl Holtzman <c.holtzman16@gmail.com>

Tue, Apr 18, 2017 at 8:32 PM

To: Adam.Lid@lacity.org

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

Opposition to agenda item #16-1357 : Please include this letter into public record to be included in any hearing, studies, and or reports pertaining to this issue.

Dear Sirs,

My name is Cheryl Holtzman and I am an exotic animal caretaker, trainer, and graduate of the Exotic Animal Training and Management program at Moorpark College. I strongly oppose this bill. Many facilities in the Los Angeles area, whether AZA accredited or not, are extraordinary facilities that not only take good care of animals, they rescue and rehabilitate animals, and educate the public and make a connection with people who otherwise would not care about these animals. Many of these companies rely on funds from public outreach programs to help with the high cost of rescuing and maintaining an animal facility, if they are no longer able to do these programs, they may not be able to run their facility and animals would have to be rehomed which could prove to be detrimental to them.

Animals in human care deserve to be well cared for and given every opportunity for a good life, this includes enrichment. In many cases, training sessions and outreach programs provide enrichment for animals. Studies have shown that many animals benefit from interaction with the public. The Bronx Zoo just did a study on stress levels in Fennec foxes used for public outreach and the study showed the animals were not stressed and enjoyed the interactions. To take away these interactions from the animals that enjoy them is unacceptable.

This bill also lacks a clear definition of what a legitimate animal facility is. If a facility is not AZA accredited does it mean they are a bad facility? The answer is a resounding no. Many facilities choose not to become AZA accredited due to reasons such as disagreeing with their views on free contact animal training. An example of this would be free contact with big cats, which AZA disapproves of, but many studio companies work with big cats in a free contact setting, but that does not mean they are a bad facility.

The Los Angeles Zoo is a great facility, but a zoo is in fact a place of amusement. The "use of animals in amusement or entertainment" seems taboo, but animals have always been a source of entertainment and that does not necessarily mean they are used and abused. There is nothing wrong with including animals in an entertainment setting as long as the animals are well taken care of. Animal welfare is of the utmost importance to the people in this industry and we take it very seriously. If an animal is stressed by an outreach situation, we do not use that animal. If an animal is stressed out in a public enclosure, it is given a home away from the public. To lump all animals and all animal caretakers together and make it illegal to share our world with the public is an atrocity. This bill needs to be rewritten very carefully before any further consideration should be made.

Please support the professionals in the industry, the ones who know about animal welfare and caretaking, and do not support this bill. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Holtzman