

Submitter: Barbara Shor
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB3214

As an Oregonian and a veterinarian who specialized in non-domestic animals, I strongly support HB 3214 to help end the suffering of wild and exotic animals in the commercial traveling entertainment industry and to protect human health and safety. These animals do not deserve to be treated in the way they are treating in traveling circuses. I see it as inhumane and abusive. They have certain requirements that are not met under these very limited conditions, and most are treated poorly.

As you consider HB 3214, please note the following:

- The exemptions within HB 3214 address all of the concerns you may have heard. The bill is narrowly drafted and would prohibit the use of a finite list of wild and exotic animals. It does not apply to farm animals, domesticated animals, amphibians, birds of prey, many small mammals and most reptiles, including snakes and turtles. Permanent exhibitions, wildlife rehabilitators, veterinary clinics and licensed or accredited academic, medical, or research institutions, including programs like 4-H, are exempt.
- Recent national polls show that more than two-thirds of Americans oppose the use of wild and exotic animals as entertainment. Within the U.S., more than 100 jurisdictions have bans in place, including several states and Benton and Multnomah Counties. Modern, human-powered circuses are increasingly popular, lucrative, and the preferred alternative to outdated animal performances.
- Wild and exotic animals in traveling acts are forced to endure long periods (16-20 hours per day) in extreme confinement for months on end, deprived of basic necessities such as natural light and substrate, veterinary care, and adequate space to move, eat, defecate/urinate, and exercise. Years of documented undercover investigations and animal welfare violations prove that inhumane treatment is inherent in the industry. The Animal Welfare Act is rarely enforced in the entertainment industry.
- Brutal control methods and physical coercion are used to force animals to perform unnatural, confusing tricks that may in themselves cause injury. Behind-the-scenes training involves aggressive, violent methods, including beating, whipping, kicking, clubbing, screaming, choking, and electric shock. Intimidation and emotional, social, or food deprivation are also commonly used. The more dangerous or stubborn the animal is considered, the more aggressively they're treated.
- Human safety and health issues are well documented. "Trained" wild animals have injured and even killed handlers and the public, and damaged property. Wildlife diseases, such as tuberculosis (TB) and SARS, are transmissible to humans. Seven zookeepers at the Oregon zoo contracted TB from elephants and according to the USDA, 12-14% of Asian elephants in the U.S. have TB. SARS has been transmitted

from civets to humans. Elephant rides and photo/petting ops with dangerous animals create risk for both health and safety.

- Enforcement is expensive and problematic because local animal control officers typically know little about each species and may be unable to recognize a sick animal; they often have little time to inspect, gather evidence, and ensure compliance. Federal (USDA) inspections are equally problematic since keeping track of animals in mobile, temporary facilities exacerbates the difficulties of maintaining welfare standards and enforcing regulations.
- Some animal entertainers claim they are “educational” because they attempt to teach the public about the animal's natural world. However, science demonstrates that they help perpetuate illegal wildlife trafficking and fuel the exotic pet trade industry, which endangers individual animals and wild populations. HB 3214 allows educational programs (per Oregon law) for entities with appropriate accreditation or certification.

Thank you for considering these health and safety concerns, as well as the welfare of the animals subjected these exploitive, and often abusive conditions.