



14 March 2023

House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon House

Re: Opposition to HB3214

Dear Chair Kropf et al.,

This letter is in opposition to House Bill 3214. This bill is unnecessary, counterproductive, and unjust. It would harm the animals of our state, and their breeders and owners, as well as numerous small businesses and the film industry.

By removing the USDA exemption, this bill would reduce the population of knowledgeable and skilled animal experts who are precisely the people working within the state to prevent exotic animals from ever being a problem. By eliminating all traveling animal shows, this Bill would hugely reduce opportunities for children, and adults, to be exposed to animals and learn to care about them. Additionally, by preventing animal owners from showing their animals, this Bill makes it virtually impossible for animal owners to generate revenue that would be used to provide for their animals.

HB3214 purports to solve a problem that does not exist in Oregon. The historic record is unimpeachable—legally exhibited animals have caused virtually no harm in our state. We have excellent laws that work. We have laws against neglect and abuse—requiring animal owners to provide not only adequate, but superb care to their animals. I ask you, what problem would this Bill solve?

HB3214 targets all owners regardless of their skills and situation. If you want to have reasonable laws, they must be based on the owner and not the animal—whatever animal a person owns, if they can keep that animal captive, happy, and healthy, and can ensure that it never gets loose, then it is not a hazard to anyone.

The rare problem that does occur with exotic animals invariably stems from the actions of people who are **already** breaking current law. When people follow the current regulations of USDA, ODA, and ODFW, problems do not arise. If we merely enforce current laws, there can be no problems.

Keeping and exhibiting animals is not intrinsically dangerous or cruel. In most cases, these animals are pampered, loved, and enjoy lives far superior to what they could have in the modern wild world or in a large zoo or other institution.

Simply put, we have laws that work. This bill provides no benefit for any resident of this state: its only effect if passed would be to advance the personal agenda of people who erroneously believe that NO animal can or should be kept in captivity and want to kill them all. It would harm many Oregon citizens, their animals, and several industries.

HB3214 was written without consulting any of the state's genuine animal experts who almost without exception oppose this ill-conceived and misguided bill. If you believe there is a problem with the current animal laws in this state, let me suggest that you consult those of us who genuinely understand the issues and devote our lives to solving them: we would be happy to help draft and support a bill that would genuinely improve our state's animal laws.

I urge you to vote "No" on HB3214.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roland Sonnenburg", is written over a horizontal line.

Roland Sonnenburg
Owner, Talented Animals