

Dear Chair Kropf and Committee members:

Thank you for considering **HB 3214** in the House Committee on Judiciary. As an Oregonian, I strongly urge you to support the bill to help end the suffering of wild and exotic animals in the commercial traveling entertainment industry and to protect human health and safety. 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.
- Public opposition to the use of wild and exotic animals for entertainment is stronger than ever before. More than 50 countries have restrictions or full bans in place relating to performing animals in traveling circuses. Within the U.S., more than 100 jurisdictions have bans in place, including several states and Benton and Multnomah Counties. Let's add Oregon to this list.
- As Ringling Bros Circus has demonstrated, modern, human-powered circuses are increasingly popular, lucrative, and the preferred alternative to outdated animal performances.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 and traumatizing 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 are treated. There is a large body of evidence that demonstrates the suffering these animals endure.
- 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.

- Traveling circus companies have long histories of Animal Welfare Act violations for cruel treatment and handling, inadequate nutrition and housing, and lack of veterinary care.
- 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. Due to understaffing, 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. Exploitation and control over a wild animal does not teach the public anything about the natural world that animal belongs in. 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.
- I have personally chatted with many Oregonians on this topic. Oregonians enjoy circuses...however, they **DO NOT** endorse neglect and coercion. They believe in promoting appreciation, not sanctioning exploitation and are turning their backs on traveling circuses with live-animal acts.
- The State of Oregon already prohibits exotic pets without a permit and several Oregon counties have restrictions in place regarding the use of performing animals in traveling shows. This demonstrates that Oregonians support compassion, not oppression and bullying.

Thank you for considering the health and safety concerns, as well as the dreadful existence of wild and exotic animals trapped in the commercial traveling entertainment industry. Please support HB 3214!

Sincerely,

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