

For Nevada Residents: Help Prohibit Private Possession of Dangerous Wild Animals

Nevada Senator Michael Roberson has introduced SB245, a state bill that would prohibit the keeping of dangerous wild animals as pets. This bill follows the escape of two chimpanzees who ran through a Las Vegas area neighborhood last year, resulting in the death of one chimp.

SB245 will prohibit the future possession of dangerous wild animals including big cats, bears, primates, alligators, and some species of venomous snakes. Current owners will be allowed to keep the animals they now have, but breeding and the acquisition of more dangerous wild animals will be forbidden. The bill exempts accredited zoos, wildlife sanctuaries, research and educational facilities, casinos and circuses.

When people keep wild animals as pets, the animals always suffer. Once-cute babies grow into dangerous and unmanageable adults, who typically are relegated to a life of misery in small, barren enclosures for the rest of their lives. Many are sent to roadside zoos or even canned hunts, in which hunters pay to shoot wild animals at close range.

The private ownership of dangerous wild animals also constitutes a threat to public safety. Since 1990, there have been more than 700 incidents involving captive big cats, bears and primates nationwide, resulting in 27 human deaths (including four children) and more than 550 injuries. Often, the animals are put to death as a result of these incidents.

How you can help

SB245 will be heard in the Senate Committee on Natural Resources on Thursday, March 28, at 1:30 p.m. (Room 2144 in the Legislative Building, 401 S. Carson St., Carson City). If you are a Nevada resident, you can take the following actions to help move this important bill forward, but you must do so by Thursday. If you do not live in Nevada and want to help, please spread the word to friends and family who may live in Nevada and urge them to take action. You can also send an email to Nevada senators.

1. For Nevada residents only: Please share your opinion in support of AB245 by visiting <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/Opinions/77th2013/A/>. Under “Bill Information and Opinion” type in AB245 where indicated. Click on the “For” button to register your opinion. You can provide comments in the box next to “Any Comments?” Last, complete “Constituent Information” (only name and physical address required).
2. Email each Nevada senator. You can use the sample message below, though we encourage you to personalize your message as much as possible. If you are a Nevada resident, please state this and provide your district number, if possible. We are providing an email block (below) that you can copy and paste into the “To” line of your email.

3. Call the Committee on Natural Resources and express your support for AB245. Contact information for the five Committee members (Ford, Segerblom, Manendo, Settlemeyer and Goicoechea) are indicated in the list below.

Sample message:

As a citizen who is concerned about both human safety and animal welfare, I urge you to support SB245, which addresses the problem of private possession of dangerous wild animals.

When people keep dangerous wild animals as pets, the animals always suffer. Once-cute babies grow into dangerous and unmanageable adults, who typically are relegated to a life of misery in small, barren enclosures for the rest of their lives. These animals often endanger the public, as evidenced by the hundreds of reported incidents involving big cats, bears, and primates in the U.S. that resulted in serious injuries and human deaths.

Dozens of states have enacted reasonable laws to restrict the private ownership of dangerous exotic animals. It's time for Nevada to do the same in order to ensure public safety and the well-being of captive wildlife. Please don't wait for a tragedy to happen before taking action.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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