

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Sharon Schwartz at 3:30pm on Tuesday, March 08, 2016, 346-S of the Capitol.

All members were present

Committee staff present:

Joanna Dolan, Legislative Research Department
Natalie Scott, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department
Shirley Jepson, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Jim Fouts, Director of Tanganyika Wildlife Park
Matt Fouts, Tanganyika Wildlife Park
Alan Smith, Executive Director, Zoological Association of America
Senator Dan Kerschen
Jack Laurie, Sheriff, Atchison County
Midge Grinstead, HSUS
Clay Thomas, Kansas citizen
Ronda Good, Kansas citizen
Katie Barnett, Attorney
Amber Barnes, Kansas citizen
Kim Pugliese, Attorney

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

Hearing on: SB97 — Allowing contact with certain regulated animals.

Chair Schwartz opened the hearing on **SB97**.

Natalie Scott, Revisor, explained that the bill amends provisions relating to contact with dangerous regulated animals ([Attachment 1](#)).

Proponents:

Jim Fouts, Owner/Director of Tanganyika Wildlife Parks, appeared before the Committee to provide testimony in support of **SB97** ([Attachment 2](#)) . Mr. Fouts indicated that **SB97** allows accredited zoos in Kansas to have the option of using young cubs in education programs. Mr. Fouts felt that the passage of **SB97** would encourage more people to participate in wildlife conservation and provide a tool to continue the growth of the Tanganyika Wildlife Parks.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES of the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources at 3:30pm on Tuesday, March 08, 2016 in Room 346-S of the Capitol.

Matt Fouts, Assistant Director, Tanganyika Wildlife Park, provided testimony in support of **SB97** ([Attachment 3](#)). Mr. Fouts noted that the enactment of the legislation would allow the Wildlife Park to provide interaction with baby animal while still preserving the intent of the law and preventing unprofessional ownership and interaction with larger and more mature cats.

Alan Smith, Executive Director, Zoological Association of America, appeared before the Committee in support of **SB97** ([Attachment 4](#)). Mr. Smith stated that current statute prohibits all contact between regulated big cats and the general public regardless of size and circumstances. Mr. Smith noted that the statute is designed to prevent private ownership of big cats to ensure the public will not interact with these large animals.

Senator Dan Kerschen appeared before the Committee in support of **SB97** ([Attachment 5](#)). The Senator noted that **SB97** would allow accredited zoos in the state the option to offer limited and controlled contact with cubs in educational seminars and news interviews.

The conferees responded to questions from the Committee.

Written testimony in support of **SB97** was received from:

Jack Hanna, Columbus Zoo ([Attachment 6](#));

Peter Brewer, DVM ([Attachment 7](#));

Rich Schwartz, Nashville Zoo ([Attachment 8](#));

Greg Seiler, DVM ([Attachment 9](#));

Donald McElroy, Chief of Police, City of Goodard ([Attachment 10](#)).

There were no conferees to appear in a "neutral" position.

Opponents:

Jack Laurie, Atchison County, on behalf of Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police, Kansas Sheriff's Association and Kansas Peace Officers Association, appeared before the Committee in opposition to **SB97** ([Attachment 11](#)). Mr. Laurie noted that their foremost concern is with the removal, by the Senate Committee, of the clouded leopard from the definition of "dangerous regulated animal".

Midge Grinstead, State Director, The Humane Society of the United States, appeared before the Committee in opposition to **SB97** ([Attachment 12](#)). Ms. Grinstead noted that the public handling of wild animals is not safe at any weight. Ms. Grinstead indicated that the use of baby animals for public photo or play session is not good for the animals.

Clay Thomas, Kansas citizen, appeared before the Committee in opposition to **SB97** ([Attachment 13](#)).

Ronda Good, Kansas citizen, appeared before the Committee in opposition to **SB97** ([Attachment 14](#)).

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

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Katie Barnett, Licensed Attorney, appeared before the Committee in opposition to **SB97** ([Attachment 15](#)) .

Amber Barnes, Good Nature Consulting, appeared before the Committee in opposition to **SB97** ([Attachment 16](#)) .

Kim Pugliese, Attorney, appeared before the Committee in opposition to **SB97** ([Attachment 17](#)) .

The conferees responded to questions from the Committee.

Written testimony in opposition to **SB97** was received from:

Robert Jenkins, Executive Director, Rolling Hills Zoo ([Attachment 18](#)) ;

Jim Maddy, Association of Zoos & Aquariums([Attachment 19](#)) ;

Judy Carman, Animal Outreach of Kansas ([Attachment 20](#)) ;

Diane Johnson, Operation Wildlife ([Attachment 21](#)) ;

Kelli Heckman, Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries ([Attachment 22](#));

Tammy Thies, The Wildcat Sanctuary ([Attachment 23](#));

Bill Nimmo, Tigers in America ([Attachment 24](#)) ;

Ed Stewart, Performing Animal Welfare Society ([Attachment 25](#)) ;

Howard Baskin, Big Cat Rescue ([Attachment 26](#)) ;

Dr. William Skaer, Sedgewick County Zoo ([Attachment 27](#)) ;

Carla Lewis, Kansas Animal Control Association ([Attachment 28](#)) ;

Ryan Guiker, Deputy Director, Sedgwick County Zoo ([Attachment 29](#)) ;

Kristin Vehrs, Association of Zoos & Aquariums ([Attachment 30](#)) .

There were no other conferees to come before the Committee.

Chair Schwartz closed the hearing on **SB97**.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for March 9, 2016.