



20 January 2015

Senate Natural Resources Committee
Chairman Larry Powell and Members of the Committee

I am writing to express the Zoological Association of America's support S.B. 97.

The Zoological Association of America (ZAA) is an organization founded to promote responsible ownership, management, conservation, and propagation of animals in both privately funded and publicly funded facilities through professional standards in husbandry, animal care, safety, and ethics.

We urge you to pass this bill immediately as it provides for much needed revisions to K.S.A. 32-1301, which deals with possession and handling of dangerous regulated animals in Kansas.

There are two provisions in 32-1301 that are very damaging to professionally managed zoological facilities in Kansas.

1) The statute 32-1301 completely prohibits all contact between regulated big cats and the general public regardless of size and circumstances. While written with good intentions this statute bans the interaction with even young cats. Interaction is a key component in encouraging people to take more interest in conservation of these magnificent animals. You can watch nature documentaries and look at animals in a zoo all you want, but nothing can compare to being able to experience a cat up close and personal, in a safe, supervised, interactive environment.

Approval of S.B. 97 would restore limited, safe, supervised, public interaction through the adoption of the Zoological Association of America's (ZAA) safety guidelines. ZAA's guidelines are utilized in all of our accredited facilities throughout the country and have proven to work well.

2) The current statute also prohibits regulated big cats from leaving their primary enclosure for use as ambassadors animals. As written, these cats can no longer be utilized by accredited facilities such as Tanganyika Wildlife Park as ambassador cats to promote education and conservation in Kansas and throughout the country.

Tanganyika Wildlife Park has proven to be a national leader for the zoological community in propagating endangered species, and in working to educate the public regarding the plight of these critically endangered cats. Their efforts are now being seriously handicapped by the language in the current statute.

Tanganyika Wildlife Park is regularly asked to appear on both local and national TV programs such as David Letterman, Good morning America, Fox News, and the Talk, with their cats to promote conservation awareness of these magnificent cats.

The changes in this bill would further safe, responsible, conservation education for the public by allowing industry accredited facilities to travel with cats such as clouded leopards and cheetahs, as ambassadors for their species during educational outreach programs and the promotion of conservation initiatives for their respective species.

The law as currently written robs the people of Kansas of a life changing experiences, hobbles the promotion of conservation efforts, and places an economic hardship on facilities like the Tanganyika Wildlife Park in Goddard, Kansas.

Tanganyika Wildlife Park is a great family attraction for Kansas and needs to have every opportunity to disseminate its education and conservation message to its visitors.

I encourage you to pass S.B. 97 and correct the inequities in the current law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter J. Brewer DVM".

Dr. Peter Brewer DVM
Chairman
ZAA