



March 4, 2016

Chairman Schwartz and Members of the House Ag and Natural Resources Committee:

I've been a veterinarian for almost 20 years and have worked around zoological specimens for over 40 years. From a veterinarian's perspective, most diseases of exotic felines and other zoological animals are species specific and cannot be transmitted to humans. There are of course exceptions (rabies, salmonella etc., toxoplasmosis, flea borne diseases, parasites and protozoal infections). However, since most zoological animals are screened for disease, vaccinated and quarantined for a period before incorporation into a new facility, these disease issues are addressed. The probability of contracting something across species is very, very low. Basic hygiene should be practiced and can prevent horizontal transmission. It is of my opinion that contact with small felids and other zoological species is not a health concern. You are no more at risk than coming in contact with domestic cats, dogs, cattle, sheep, rabbits, goats, etc. etc. etc. In fairness, would you ban contact with those animals as well? That premise is not sound. Please call me if you have more specific questions regarding zoonotic diseases.

Respectfully,

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

Peter J Brewer, DVM

508-726-2801