



21 March 2017

Honorable John Barker, Chairman
Federal & State Affairs Committee
Kansas House of Representatives
300 SW 10th Ave
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Chairman Barker and members of the Committee:

I am Jim Fouts, Owner/Director of Tanganyika Wildlife Park in Goddard, KS. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB 2276.

I have nearly 45 years of experience in the Zoo industry and have as much or more experience in these matters as anyone in the state. I have worked in Zoos or supplied Zoos from our African facilities since 1972. We continue this today along with operating Tanganyika Wildlife Park.

Tanganyika is a family owned and operated Zoo that is home to over 500 birds and animals. We are accredited by the Zoological Association of America (ZAA), the 2nd largest zoo trade association in America comprised of more than 60 accredited members. Tanganyika specializes in propagating rare and endangered species ranging from the black-footed penguin to Indian rhinoceros, from critically endangered Amur leopards, snow and clouded leopards to cheetahs.

A portion of our primary mission is to strengthen the connection between people and the natural world through interactive and immersive experiences as we have experienced firsthand the positive impact this can have on our visitors' willingness to support wildlife conservation.

Our attendance surpasses 100,000 visitors a year and growing with our economic impact in the millions of dollars for our community and the state of Kansas. We employ up to 75 employees during peak season. Just this month alone we sold over 25,000 season passes generating over \$100,000 in tax revenue for the state of KS.

It is important to mention here that both Tanganyika and ZAA are opposed to non-human primates as pets.

That being said: HB 2276 is a bad bill for us at Tanganyika.

The centerpiece of our interactive experiences is our lemur island where we have had well over 1,000,000 lemur encounters in a supervised environment without incident. Lemur encounters are critical to the success of our Park and people travel from great distances just to experience our lemurs. **This bill will eliminate our lemur encounter and endanger our business.**

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The purpose of this bill is not to address existing serious issues regarding animal welfare or public safety issues in Kansas because there is little or no evidence that a problem actually exists in the state of Kansas.

Rather, it is a bill crafted by HSUS pushing the same misguided ideology all over the country and to eventually ban all animal human contact, close all zoos, do away with animal agriculture, and eventually go after your dog and cat.

Zoo proponents of this bill along with their accrediting organization AZA are on board with HSUS to force their philosophical beliefs on those who do not agree with them and destroy free market competition. Other Zoos in Kansas for the most part do very little animal interaction with visitors and that's their choice, so why should they be able to force their beliefs and practices on others. At Tanganyika we choose to be different just as do many other Zoos in the US. AZA's own position statement on animal encounters (<https://www.aza.org/cec-ambassador-animal-position-statement>) reaffirms that our methods are correct.

At Tanganyika, we have been under assault for years from competing government zoos who belong to AZA, a trade organization different than ours (ZAA). HB 2276 is a classic example of government run Zoos overreach waging war to suppress private competition. They want to be the only game in town.

I do not believe the Kansas Legislature and this Committee feel it is their responsibility to pick winners and losers in the free market place.

Additional questions to ask before considering this bill:

Why is USDA taken out of this bill as the competent authority when they are the licensing authority for every dealer, zoo and exhibitor in the US?? An A, B, or C USDA license should be acceptable as in nearly every other state.

If this bill is passed zoos in Great Bend, Independence, and Clay Center will probably close once they are no longer allowed to have primates and those animals listed on the dangerous animal list that comprises the bulk of their collections.

Why does the bill lump all primates from 6 oz marmosets to 400 lb gorillas in the same category??

In closing I would like to say there is much more at stake here than primates as pets some of which I have briefly mentioned here today.

I believe you are being misled by HSUS regarding the purpose and merits of this bill.

If there is truly a need for legislation such as this isn't it only right that those affected by this legislation be invited to participate in the process.

I urge you to reject HB 2276 as written.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

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