



March 25, 2022

Chair Torrey Westrom
Senate Agriculture and Rural Development Finance and Policy Committee
95 University Avenue W., Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3201
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Amending the MN Regulated Animal Law – HF 4166/SF 4280

Chair Westrom and Committee Members,

The Animal Humane Society opposes legislation that attempts to weaken Minnesota law which regulates the possession, care, and commercial trade of exotic animals. The Minnesota Regulated Animal Law has successfully reduced dangerous incidents involving exotic animals. Senate File 4280 and House File 4166 weakens existing standards, threatening public safety and animal welfare.

As Supervising Humane Agent for the Animal Humane Society, I regularly observed first-hand the pain, neglect, and needless death of exotic animals. Large predatory animals require unique confinement, maintenance, and nutritional care that most private owners are unable to provide. As a result, many of these animals are condemned to living in deplorable environmental conditions.

The Minnesota Regulated Animal Law, which received broad support from the Minnesota law enforcement community, provides law enforcement with the tools needed to effectively regulate facilities possessing exotic animals. Amending the law to exempt entities accredited by the Zoological Association of America (ZAA) will remove many of these essential tools by allowing ZAA-accredited facilities to:

- Possess regulated animals without registering them with local law enforcement;
- Avoid compliance with state-mandated animal care, safety, or recordkeeping requirements;
- Not report the escape of exotic animals to local law enforcement.

Minnesota allows facilities with Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accreditation to possess exotic animals because of AZA's high standards. The over 240 AZA accredited facilities have a proven track record of providing professional care for animals in a safe environment. If a facility wants to possess dangerous animals in Minnesota, it should meet the same high standards that other facilities have met.

I have never had to seize an exotic animal in the 16 years since the Regulated Animal Law went into effect. Other than lowering standards, what greater good would amending the existing law achieve?

Respectfully,

Keith Streff
Supervising Humane Agent
Animal Humane Society
Golden Valley