



HEMKER PARK & ZOO
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March 30, 2022

Senator Torrey Westrom (12,R)
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3201
St. Paul MN 55155

RE: SF4280

Dear Senator Westrom,

My name is Joan Hemker, founder, and owner of Hemker Park & Zoo and I am here today to express my support for the Minnesota Statute SF 4280 an amendment to the Regulated Animal Statute MN 346.155.

Hemker Park & Zoo (HPZ) started in 1977 and is a staple to Minnesota, as we are over 100 miles away from other accredited zoos. Many schools, children and their families cannot afford to travel that far to receive the same education and conservation message we are teaching them here. Conservation and preservation are extremely important to us, and we work with the Dyre Island Conservation Trust and the International Rhino Foundation. Animal well-being and safety for the animals, staff and guests is our number one priority.

The mission of HPZ is to highlight and enhance animals' species and encourage environmental conservation throughout integrated partnerships and practical approaches to wildlife management.

We are aware of the needs for animal well-being and safety as we currently do have animals that are on the regulated animal statue. We have worked with these regulated animals for over 40 years and our main priority continues to be animal care, and safety for the animals, the staff, and guests.

We currently have a wide variety of the animals we own at over 15 different AZA zoological facilities in the United States with one being right here in Minnesota. This facility has our animals on exhibit and is part of a breeding program that was formed by AZA to ensure genetic diversity. They are also profiting from our animals being on exhibit for guests to see when guests are visiting their zoo.

In addition, we house over 45 animals from 25 different AZA institutions, right here at Hemker Park & Zoo. For every animal we house at our facility for an AZA institution, we go through an extremely rigorous inspection with them on-site inspecting our husbandry polices, the exhibits, daily care, vet care program, animal standards, with an emphasis that focuses on staff, animal, and public's safety. We have met and exceeded over 25 AZA institution inspections. In addition, one of the co-owners of Hemker Park & Zoo is a professional member of AZA.

Hemker Park & Zoo supports and requests the amendment to MN Statue 346.155 to add facilities that house AZA animals.

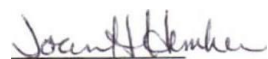
HPZ supports Minnesota SF 2480 amendment as written:

Subd. 7. Exemptions.

(1) Facilities that house AZA animals

I am available at any time with any questions regarding this and I thank the authors of SF 4280 for giving facilities that house AZA animals the exemption they very much deserve.

Sincerely,



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