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December 18, 2017

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL – cao@co.washington.or.us

Washington County Board of Commissioners
254 N First Avenue
Hillsboro, OR 97124

Re: Proposed Ordinance 830 - An Ordinance Prohibiting the Keeping of Exotic Animals

Dear Chair Duyck and Members of the Commission:

Humane Oregon was formed in 2014 to help advocate for humane treatment of animals in Oregon’s political process and elections. We are a moderate but progressive animal welfare organization, with board members from many different parts of Oregon’s animal welfare community. We are not affiliated with any other state or national organization.

Humane Oregon supports passage of Ordinance 830 to prohibit the keeping of exotic animals in the county. Allowing people to keep exotic animals, whether as pets or for exhibition to make money, fuels an industry in which these animals – big cats, canines, bears, non-human primates and crocodiles – are bred, bought and sold for highly confined lives of captivity. Simply put, we think it is unnatural and inhumane to treat them that way. They were meant to live freely in the wild with lots of room to roam.

While we support the proposed ordinance, we would like to see one exemption eliminated. In its current form, the proposed ordinance would exempt "[a] [t]emporary circus, carnival or other similar itinerant show business, if the Exotic Animal is kept for the primary purpose of public entertainment." Allowing exotic animals in the county even temporarily for the purposes described in the exemption also helps perpetuate the cruel industry of breeding and trading exotic animals for confined lives of captivity. We urge the Commission to strike this exemption from the ordinance.

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Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Brian Posewitz

Brian Posewitz
Board Member and Administrator