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COMMISSION

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MLS

Dear Mr. Sutton,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the petition submitted to the state of California by the Animal Legal Defense Fund, Big Cat Rescue, Born Free USA, Wildcat Haven, and Wildcat Sanctuary asking the state to amend regulations regarding breeding and possession of "hybrid cats". I am not a breeder, nor do I ever plan to become one. I am chiropractor and clinical nutritionist and a prominent member of my community. I am also a savannah cat owner and have been for the past 8 years. I am very concerned about the lies and half-truths put forth in this petition. It seems that the groups asking for this ban have bought into the hype and myths about savannahs that they have read on the internet. The ADLF states that "these hybrid breeds, like savannahs and bengals, are unregulated and pose a threat to public health, native wildlife, and animal welfare in California." Where is the research or statistics to back up the ridiculous statement? How can these cats be a threat to public health? They are housepets, just like any other cats or dogs. As far as I am aware, there have never been any reports of an attack on a human by a savannah or bengal. They are no more likely to bite or scratch than any other domestic cat (which of course could be provoked to do under certain circumstances). The threat to native wildlife would be exactly the same as if any other breed of cat got out and became feral.

This petition states that these cats are larger and often grow up to spray, bite, and wreak havoc and that because of this, hybrid cats are at increased risk of abandonment. This is such a crock of B.S. There is so much hype on the internet regarding how big these cats get. The truth is that the majority of them are the same size or only slightly larger than the typical domestic cat. One of mine weighs 14 pounds, and the other 2 weigh 15 pounds. I had a tom cat who weighed 19 pounds and no one was up in arms about how big or dangerous he was. These cats are no more prone to spraying, biting, or wreaking havoc than any other cats. NONE of mine spray or bite, and never have. They are an energetic breed and they like to play hard and run around the house. I suppose some people may describe that as "wreaking havoc", but they don't use that description if their puppy does the same thing. These cats are absolutely NOT at increased risk of abandonment. Virtually every breeder has a new owner sign a contract stating that if for any reason the owner cannot keep the cat, the cat must be returned to the breeder so that they can either find it a new home or keep the cat themselves. The majority of people who spend \$1000-\$10,000 on a cat are not going to abandon it. "It makes little sense to inflict stringent laws causing the inability to keep much loved pets, with care funded by owners, to donation only funded sanctuaries claiming overcrowding. Thousands of dollars paid to acquire a pet does not usually end in abandonment or release into neighboring areas. Illogical claims are often made by special interest groups with little supporting evidence, but much emotional propaganda and anecdotal incidences used for political influence". (www.examiner.com) There are so FEW savannahs available from Savannah Cat Rescue that there are over 11,000 people on the waiting list to adopt a savannah. The petitioners claim that there are thousands of hybrid cats being abandoned. Where are they???

Bengals and savannahs are both breeds that are recognized as domestic by the International Cat Association (TICA, www.tica.org). They are housepets that eat cat food and use litter boxes. They are cherished, beloved family members who are wonderful companions, extremely loyal, intelligent, fun-loving, and energetic. There is absolutely no need to regulate them differently from any other cat breed. The following is a link to a youtube video that is a compilation from savannahs owners throughout the country. It is an excellent way to see the gentle nature of this breed, if you are not already familiar with them. Here's the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sayvhB-FquM>

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Lysa Stark D.C.

Lysa Stark, D.C.

