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24 July 2014

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2014 AUG -1 PM 3:16

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Mike Sutton, President
California Fish and Game Commission
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Sutton:

I am writing to express serious concerns regarding the recent filing of a Petition to change the regulations of 'Hybrid' cats in the State of California.

First, I would implore, plead and pray that this Petition would be summarily dismissed on the grounds of Lack of Merit for these reasons:

- 1) The USDA defines a cross between a Wild Animal and a Domestic Animal as a Domestic Animal.¹ The Hybrid breeds targeted in this Petition include these domestic cats: Bengals, Savannahs, Chausies, and other cats with small wild cat ancestry. They are not dangerous and are found as household pets across the United States and worldwide in other Countries. They make perfectly good pets.²
- 2) The Petition is filled with conjectured opinions that are supported not by scientific data or documentation, but rather by select sensational opinions of those who are sympathetic to the Petitioners, or the Petitioners themselves claiming to be experts, who live outside of California and want to control those who reside in California.
- 3) The Four Sanctuary based Petitioners are from a niche segment of the Animal Rescue world that has narrowly focused experience with unmanageable Wild Big Cats such as Lions, Tigers, Leopards and do not represent the thousands of domestic pet owners at large who have Bengals, Savannahs, Chausies, Ocicats, and other domestically bred, small cats living happily in homes with families. The Petitioners have limited experience by comparison and, as would be expected by the nature of their work, see only the worst of the worst in terms of unmanageable behaviors. These, by the way, are among the same behaviors that can be found in isolated individual cases among all breeds of domestic cats and feral cats³. This in all good consciousness should never be broadly applied across an entire type of domestic cat breeds as grounds for extinction.⁴
- 4) The behaviors claimed in the Petition as dangerous and detrimental to wildlife are exhibited in domestic cats as a whole. Other references are gross exaggerations of isolated incidents promoting emotional fear which is then linked to public safety, which is a tactic to gain attention, not a scientific approach to the hypothetical problems identified in the Petition.

¹ <http://awic.nal.usda.gov/final-rules-animal-welfare-9-cfr-parts-1-2-and-3> Cat means any live or dead cat (Felis catus) or any cat-hybrid cross. hybrid cross means an animal resulting from the crossbreeding between two different species or types of animals. Crosses between wild animal species, such as lions and tigers, are considered to be wild animals. Crosses between wild animal species and domestic animals, such as dogs and wolves or buffalo and domestic cattle, are considered to be domestic animals.

² <http://www.kirembosavannahs.com/faq/Savannahs-Good-Pets.pdf>

³ Jackson Galaxy – My Cat from Hell – Animal Planet – any episode.

⁴ Refer to Petitioners submitted change in Regulations: pages 21 & 22 Ciii all spayed & neutered & C.C.R. § 671.1(c)(3)(E):The department will not consider the possession, sale, or export of hybrid cats as pets to be an authentic or legitimate use.]

- 5) The Petition contains many what if , hypothetical, conjectured scenarios that simply have no proof in reality. There is no scientific data or breed specific studies to support the concerns raised with respect to the discriminated Domestic cats targeted in the Petition.
- 6) The Petition proposes to take away the existing freedoms of people who have had these animals for decades. Bengals are unique to California in that the first Bengal cat born in the USA was born in California in 1963, nearly 50 years ago, and have been a recognized breed for 30 years with The International Cat Association (TICA) who reports the Bengal cat to be the most popular registered cat in the world.⁵ This is something that California should be proud of, not try to extinguish. Likewise the Savannah Cat has been in existence for nearly 30 years.⁶ The first Hybrids (Domestic cats crossed with small wild cats) have been documented since 1871 and were first exhibited in London during the first organized cat show.⁷
- 7) Do these cats have advanced hunting skills above and beyond other Domestic Cats? There is no documented scientific evidence to support this notion. There is however a lot of conjecture with phrases such as 'may' introduce enhanced hunting skills, "presumed" innately superior hunting ability; Hybrid cats are 'likely' to have the ability⁸. I would submit to you that there is no proof that this is true, only hypothesis, which is a supposition or proposed explanation made on the basis of limited evidence as a starting point for further investigation. It is a disservice to any animal, or even a person, to 'assume' something about them that has not been proven and then discriminate against them because of it.
- 8) Do these cats have unusual genetically pre-disposed health issues? No they do not, they do have, however, some of the same health issues that are seen in other purebred cats. HCM , which is cited in the Petition is the most common cause of heart disease in cats, most notably in Maine Coon Cats, Ragdolls, British Shorthairs, American Shorthairs and Devon Rexes. Progressive retinal atrophy is also listed in the petition as specific to Bengal cats, however this condition is also found to occur in Abyssinian, Somali, Persian breeds. Polyneuropathy is also listed specifically as a Bengal Cat health issue, however it is a fairly common disorder in cats and dogs, and the cause is unknown⁹ Does this Petition's slanted discriminatory view, with no specified studies or surveys on the health issues listed, constitute a viable reason to discontinue breeding, ownership and possession of these breeds of cats? And dogs for that matter ? I think not.

I am born and raised in California and hold a strong identity to my native State. Please do not continue with this Petition for Regulations changing the status of domestic Hybrid Cats. There is no scientific data specific to these cats to support the claims, fears and hypothesis given. It would be a travesty and unconscionable to regulate Domestic Hybrid cats through continuation of a Petition that is without merit. Doing so will unnecessarily add further to the current burden of overworked public servants and be an unwise use of the current severe shortfall of Taxpayer's money.

Sincerely,



Pamela Hansen

⁵TICA The International Cat Association current registry (7-23-2014) lists 103,593 Bengals, 9,799 Savannahs, 1,237 Chausies

⁶http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Savannah_cat

⁷<http://www.bengalsillustrated.com/bengal-cat-history/>

⁸<http://www.zoossa.com.au/files/f/9159/2008%20savannah%20cats%20risk%20assessment.pdf> .

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