

RECEIVED  
CALIFORNIA  
FISH AND GAME  
COMMISSION

2014 AUG 15 AM 10:35

MLS

Kristen M. Kuznicki

August 1, 2014

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

Dear Mr. Sutton,

I am writing this letter in regards to the current petitioning and potential proposal for banning of certain domestic feline breeds in California- the Savannah, Chausie and Bengal cats.

The hybrid cats in question are no more than domestic housecats and unconditionally loved members of many families. Savannahs, Chausies and Bengals are all recognized by The International Cat Association (TICA) as domestic breeds, with registration status' dating back as far as 1986. I have been a cat owner my entire life and never once have I experienced the extreme love, devotion and companionship as the hybrid breeds mentioned above, until interacted with them. They play fetch; they enjoy water; they love children; they walk on leashes; ultimately, they have traits similar to that of a dog! Ask an owner of any of these cats and they will tell you the same – they are not a “danger to society” and certainly not “Franken-felines”, as claimed by the organizations who are trying to ban them. Many of these pets share households with other pets and children, and are often used as therapy animals for the ill. This alone is certainly evidence against false claims.

The International Cat Association describes behavioral characteristics of each of these breeds on their website (<http://www.tica.org/index.php>):

*“Today's domestic Bengal cat comes only from breeding Bengals to other Bengals and requires no specialized care.” “Bengals are generally confident, curious and devoted companions. They get along well with other pets when properly introduced and enjoy being part of a family.” “Accepted as a new breed in TICA in 1986...”*

*“The Chausie was awarded foundation registration status in 1995 with The International Cat Association (TICA).” “These domestic cats are good natured and affectionate that love to play. They often develop deep bonds with their owners. Sociable in nature, Chausies love to play fetch and will often walk on a leash.”*

*"TICA accepted the Savannah for registration in 2001. The Savannah was accepted for Championship status by TICA in 2012." "It is also a very loyal cat who will bond strongly with its human family. It is a domestic breed."*

Clearly these breeds have fantastic, active, loving personalities across the board, or they wouldn't be promoted as such by the largest, most recognized cat association in the world.

Activist groups are calling breeders and owners of these cats "animal abusers". Such slander is hateful, discriminating and provides a great deal of misinformation to the public. It is very disheartening to see nationally-recognized "sanctuaries" and "non-profits" using slander to their advantage rather than hard facts and evidence. Is it maybe because they have no hard evidence, and this is their only way to gain support without revealing their true objective(s)?

I have personally visited many breeder facilities and the cats live far more enjoyable lives than many regular house cats. They are not abused, neglected or kept in "mill-like" conditions; they live active lifestyles, receive top-notch veterinary care, eat the best kibble and receive very much love and attention. The claims being made by the activist organizations are ignorant and in most cases, not true. Many breeders are registered with TICA and/or the USDA, which means they must uphold satisfactory standards of living for the cats in possession.

These cats do not pose a threat to the environment, public or other animals; they are loving companions. Additionally, they have been members of families for multiple decades, and it would be wrong to ban them now. Opposing organizations have been stating many common health ailments and behavioral issues are exclusive to hybrids, when it is a fact that they experience no more of these issues than any other domestic cat breed. Again, this is greatly misinforming the public.

One of the opposing groups, the Animal Legal Defense Fund, states the cats "grow up to spray, bite and otherwise wreak havoc" in their press release. This statement, particularly, is one of the most inaccurate pieces of information being promoted to the public. These behaviors can occur with any feline- feral, domestic and/or hybrid- when not spayed/neutered and raised properly. It is unfair and not truthful at all to pin-point this on hybrid cats; in fact, if you look up videos on YouTube, speak with owners, look at social media outlets or even meet a Savannah, Chausie or Bengal, you will be looking at the hard evidence against this bogus, misleading claim.

If the activist organizations trying to enforce this ban really, truly cared about cats then why aren't they focusing on the bigger picture rather than trying to rip apart families and take away the livelihood of breeders? Do they really think that taking cats from their rightful owners and placing them in shelters or sanctuaries is providing a better lifestyle for them? Many of these facilities are already overcrowded and facing funding struggles, which can and will result in death sentences for innocent animals.

As mentioned above, if the organizations truly cared about cats, why don't they focus their energy elsewhere? The trap and release program is a great example and would help reduce overcrowding at shelters, and ultimately prevent euthanasia. What about animal abuse and neglect? The laws and punishment for offenders are considerably too light; we have seen an increasing amount of animal

torture cases receiving media attention, causing more cases to pop up, because offenders learn they can walk away nearly scotch-free. Is it maybe because these causes would not support the organization agendas?

Banning these beautiful, loving creatures would not only rip apart families for no concrete reason, but would be detrimental to the livelihood of breeders and ultimately contribute to more serious problems (such as major increases in overcrowding, and euthanasia). Savannah, Chausie and Bengal cats are domestic and of no threat to society or the ecosystem. Animal activist groups are speaking with their own agendas in mind and using false information to gain the public's support on this topic. This ban could very well lead to extinction of hybrid breeds if passed. I speak for many animal lovers and owners- we sincerely hope you will consider meeting one of these lovable creatures first, and to ultimately NOT accept this proposed ban.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I sincerely thank you for your time and consideration, and trust that you and your qualified staff will make the right decision to leave our families alone.

Respectfully,

Kristen M. Kuznicki