



**Tigers in America**  
**250 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**New York, NY 10014**

January 4, 2016

Dear Members of the Kansas House Standing Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources,

We are Tigers in America, a non-profit organization dedicated to rescuing and housing unwanted or abused big cats in this country. We respectfully request you oppose the passage of SB 97.

We have firsthand experience in dealing with the consequences of cub petting and roadside zoo operations that allow public interaction. When cubs become adults they are no longer of commercial value. They are dangerous and costly to feed and when they can't earn their keep they are usually dumped (sold to an exotic animal dealer), given away, or killed outright. The dealers resell the tigers to lower grade facilities where they are fed road kill and garbage until they get sick and die.

Our calls come in from keepers and owners across the country. In some cases a community is at risk when an owner has not maintained proper enclosures and the sheriff seizes the animals. This was the case in May of 2013 in Atchison, Kansas when we assisted in rescuing 5 big cats including a tiger and two cougars.

In the last 3 years we have helped relocate of 115 tigers from 29 facilities in this country. The overpopulation of unwanted big cats is driven by breeding for photo ops where you can hold, pet, walk, run or swim with a tiger cub.

The tragic death of Haley is just one of the byproducts of tiger petting and the photo op business, but it's not an isolated instance. Things continually go badly at these interactive facilities. On average one person is killed every year and one person is mauled every month and the number of unreported incidents is unknown.

Backyard breeding has been going since the early 70's. We estimate at least 60,000 tigers have been bred in that time and not one has been reintroduced into the wild. There is no conservation value to this practice. They are bred for amusement and die from neglect.

Public opinion regarding the treatment of exotic animals in captivity is turning: Sea World and their captive orcas, Ringling Brothers and their elephants. The profits from exploiting exotic animals is being called into question. More kids question the fate of the animals they see in performance.

We think Haley's law has reduced the number of big cat incidents as well as the probability of a Zanesville-like incident in Kansas and we would hope other states will follow your lead.

Please do not give up the gains you have made.

Sincerely,

Bill Nimmo  
Director  
Tigers in America