



Big Cat Rescue
12802 Easy Street
Tampa, FL 33625
www.BigCatRescue.org

January 4, 2016

TO: Kansas House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

RE: Cub petting misery and contribution to extinction in the wild

Dear Committee Member:

I am writing on behalf of big cat cubs to ask you not to support SB 97 for two reasons. The first is the misery this causes to the cubs during the time they are exploited in this way to make money and in the way they are treated once they are too big to use in this way. The second is less obvious and well known, but very real - that rampant breeding of tiger cubs in the US impairs the credibility of our State Department in its efforts to urge banning the international trade in tiger parts that is driving the poaching that has decimated the tiger population.

How cubs used for petting are treated. The people who exhibit the cubs have little choice but to physically punish the cubs. Watch any domestic kitten or tiger cub that is four to sixteen weeks old. When they are awake, what is their natural behavior? Is it to sit quietly in someone's lap for a photo? Or is it run, jump, and learn to use their claws and teeth, the things nature hard wires into them so they can develop the muscles and skills to survive?

We have numerous videos of cubs used for petting and for photo ops. The cubs are constantly trying to get away, squirming and screaming. Others are so exhausted from not being allowed the significant amount of sleep they need that they do not even move when handled. In one video we were sent cubs had raging diarrhea but were kept on display. In another a cub leaped on a young child knocking him to the ground. In another the trainer is hitting the cub from behind with a stick with small whip at the end to show how to make a cub walk. It is impossible to "regulate" how the cubs are treated because you cannot afford to have inspectors there full time.

Being torn from their mothers at birth is a torment to both mother and cub. Being used for petting and photo ops and physically disciplined to make them more "manageable" and deprived of sleep is a just a miserable life for the cub. But the mistreatment does not end there. The exhibitors need to constantly breed more cubs. When the cubs are too old to pet, they usually end up living in tiny spaces with no mental stimulation, resulting in ever increasing numbers of big cats living in inhumane conditions.

If you or your staff would like more detail on the misery caused by cub petting please visit <http://bigcatrescue.org/abuse-issues/issues/pet-cubs/>.

Effect on impending extinction of the tiger. A recently published book Blood of the Tiger by Judy Mills provides a Woodward/Bernstein kind of expose' of what is really happening in the

international efforts to save the tiger from impending extinction. The US, India and many other nations that are members of the CITES international treaty are trying to stop the trade in tiger parts and products made from tiger parts (“derivatives”). China is trying to sabotage those efforts.

China has “tiger farms” owned by politically connected individuals that contain 6000 tigers they want to slaughter to sell for parts and derivatives. This trade drives the poaching that is decimating the estimated small population of about 3000 tigers left in the wild. But when the US State Department urges Asian nations to stop the tiger farm breeding and the trade in tiger products, the Chinese point to the rampant breeding and lack of tracking of tigers in the US and ask why should they stop breeding in captivity when people in the US do so freely?

The trend in public opinion and state law is to not just ban contact, but ban private ownership altogether. Kansas showed wonderful leadership in caring both for people and for animals with the law passed after the tragic death of Haley Hilderbrand. To step backwards now and allow public contact that creates so much misery for the animals and impairs our ability to preserve the tiger in the wild would be another terrible tragedy.

Sincerely,



Howard Baskin
Advisory Board Chairman
813-505-5565
Howard.Baskin@BigCatRescue.org

