

Member, Board of Supervisors
District 4



City and County of San Francisco

KATY TANG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 24, 2015
Contact: Ashley Summers
(415) 554-7460

**** PRESS RELEASE ****

SUPERVISOR TANG SPONSORS LEGISLATION BANNING PERFORMANCE OF EXOTIC ANIMALS IN SAN FRANCISCO

*New law sends strong message about the abusive treatment of wild and exotic animals in
entertainment*

San Francisco, CA – Today, Supervisor Katy Tang announced legislation she is sponsoring at the Board of Supervisors to ban the performance of wild or exotic animals in San Francisco. The legislation is co-sponsored by Supervisors Scott Wiener and Norman Yee.

This proposed prohibition is designed to bolster existing laws that do not adequately or effectively protect wild or exotic animals from conditions they are often subject to when involved in animal shows. The United States Animal Welfare Act (AWA) is limited in scope and does not cover, for example, the veterinary care of animals outside licensed facilities. Animal welfare provisions of the California Penal Code are more specific, but are ineffective because travelling animal shows are not covered under California law when the animals are not in California – such as if they are travelling or being trained in jurisdictions outside of California.

“Wild and exotic animals are often forced to perform tricks that involve abusive force, and some animals must travel for extensive periods of time in confined conditions,” said Supervisor Tang. “The safety of workers and onlookers is also put at risk, and there are many incidences in California where animals or people have been hurt during or in preparation of a performance.”

“San Franciscans are passionate about the humane treatment of animals, and we have a long history of adopting innovative policies to further that goal,” said Supervisor Scott Wiener. “Bringing exotic animals into San Francisco for the entertainment of our residents – many of those animals having been abused and even tortured – isn't the San Francisco way. This legislation is an important step to ensure that San Francisco doesn't participate in the mistreatment of these beautiful and majestic animals.”

In Anaheim in 2011, a 54-year old elephant collapsed after performing at the circus even though the USDA had cited the company for failing to adequately treat her medical needs. And in Los Angeles in 2014, a boa constrictor bit a backup dancer in connection with a music awards show.

“It is disappointing that cruel animal practices are still being used today under the guise of entertainment. Living creatures should never be subjected to abuse, humiliation, and confinement. I am supportive of this legislation and I hope that we are able to encourage the public to also support efforts to end animal abuse in shows and circuses,” stated Supervisor Norman Yee.

Member, Board of Supervisors
District 4



City and County of San Francisco

KATY TANG

Changes to the San Francisco Health Code will define exotic animals to include those such as: elephants, giraffes, camels, tigers and bears. It will exclude the California Academy of Sciences, veterinarians, the San Francisco Zoo, and any shows for educational purposes or involving domesticated or companion animals such as horses, cats, or dogs.

“In San Francisco, we are setting an example as stewards and protectors of nature and its creatures,” said Supervisor Tang. “We want to send a strong message to other jurisdictions throughout the country and the world that abusive conduct toward animals is unacceptable and we are not welcoming of any show that involves forcing animals to behave in ways not found in nature.”

The ordinance will next be heard at the Land Use and Transportation Committee and then at the full Board of Supervisors.

###