



# DANE COUNTY, WISCONSIN CONSIDERING ORDINANCE TO BAN POSSESSION OR SALE OF LIVE EXOTIC ANIMALS

## **The Issue:**

The Dane County Board of Supervisors has issued [an amendment](#) to the county code of ordinances prohibiting the possession and sale of exotic animals. This ordinance amendment does NOT provide a specific list of these animals. The proposal has been referred to four Board of Supervisor committees and awaits further action.

## **The Impact:**

The proposed ordinance amendment defines an “exotic animal” as “any animal that is not normally domesticated in the United States, including any such animal’s hybrid with domestic species, or an animal that is wild by nature, regardless of whether it was bred in the wild or captivity”. The Board plans to ban any person in Dane County from possessing or selling these animals. The proposal exempts the following persons or entities from the ban:

- Any person licensed under Chapter 169 of the Wisconsin Statutes (pertaining to captive wildlife);
- A veterinarian (for the purposes of providing medical treatment to exotic animals);
- A public zoo or aquarium;
- A circus; or
- Any person authorized to possess or sale these animals by the Department of Natural Resources.

Anyone found in violation of this ordinance is subject to fines ranging from \$100 to \$500.

## **PIJAC Position:**

PIJAC supports reasonable regulation of animals that may pose a threat to public health or safety, but does not believe absolute bans are sound public policy. Where species are to be restricted, legislation should specifically list species subject to restriction rather than relying on a subjective definition. Not all so-called “exotic animals” do in fact represent a significant health or safety risk to the public. This proposal allows the Department of Natural Resources to authorize certain people with the right to possess and/or sale these animals. However, this amendment sets no guidelines as to how this authorization is to be determined.

It may be appropriate to restrict ownership of certain species not generally kept as pets to persons with the specific knowledge and facilities to properly maintain them. Furthermore, such bans drive business underground, thereby depriving the government of effective regulation, and eliminate the safe and responsible ownership of animals by those with the knowledge and resources necessary for such ownership. A ban on selling these animals will close down some businesses; therefore hindering the economy and job market in Wisconsin.

### **Recommended Action:**

This amendment has been referred to three Board of Supervisor Committees: [Health & Human Needs](#), [Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources](#) and [Public Works & Transportation](#) as well as a County Board: [Board of Health](#). No hearing date has been set. If you are a pet owner or pet business in Dane County this proposal WILL AFFECT YOU! Contact the members of the committees/board listed above with your concerns and questions immediately!

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact PIJAC's Bambi Nicole Osborne at 202-452-1525, ext. 105 or via email at [Bambi@pijac.org](mailto:Bambi@pijac.org).



### **PIJAC Members! PIJAC Fans! Join US...**

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) has been protecting and promoting responsible pet ownership for nearly forty years. Follow our successes, events, and action alerts through Facebook and/or Twitter at PIJAC4pets. If you are not already a Member, please join us today by visiting [www.pijac.org/membership](http://www.pijac.org/membership). For additional information on PIJAC and its many exciting campaigns, please visit: [www.pijac.org](http://www.pijac.org). Or, contact us at 1-800-553-PETS (1-800-553-7387); [members@pijac.org](mailto:members@pijac.org).

**On behalf of pets, responsible pet owners, and the pet industry, we thank you!**