

Dear ARAV Members,

There are currently two bills that are being discussed in Washington that I think I should bring to your attention.

The first bill, titled the “**Nonnative Wildlife Invasion Protection Act**” (H.R.669) is currently in the House of Representatives. The purpose of this Act is to establish a risk assessment process to: “Prevent the introduction into, and establishment in, the United States of nonnative wildlife species that will cause or are likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to other animal species’ health or human health.” If passed, the bill would establish a list of species for which there would be bans established on the importation, breeding, and interstate transport and sale. It is not clear at this time, which species would be included.

If passed as currently written this bill could place bans on all nonnative, nondomestic species – with the exception of zoos and government agencies. I encourage you to read the Act (web address below).

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-in/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_bills&docid=f:h669ih.txt.pdf

The second bill (S. 373) hopes to **amend Title 18 (the Lacey Act), United States Code, to include constrictor snakes of the species Python genera as an injurious animal**. This bill would ban the importation of all python species. This bill is currently in the Senate. Again, I encourage each of you to read the bill (web address below).

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-in/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_bills&docid=f:s373is.txt.pdf

After reading these bills **please contact your representatives in Washington** and let them know your position on these matters. If you are unsure who your Senator/Congressman is or how to contact him/her, please visit:

<http://whoismyrepresentative.com>

If you would like you can use the following letters, after modifying/personalizing them.

Dear Congressman:

I would like to express my opposition to H.R.669

I believe that the Nonnative Wildlife Invasion Prevention Act (H.R. 669), introduced by Del. Madeleine Bordallo (D-Guam) Chair of the Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife of the House Natural Resources Committee would substantially impact how nonnative species are regulated under the Lacey Act. As currently written, it would make the vast majority of exotic pets kept as companion animals impossible to own, including such household pets as hamsters, guinea pigs, ferrets, corn snakes, cockatiels, parakeets, love birds, tropical fish, and many others .

As a veterinarian, I believe this proposed act is seriously flawed and would impact the rights of pet owners as well as businesses such as my hospital that support the exotic pet industry.

While I agree that injurious wildlife do impact the well-being of ecosystems in the United States, I believe a targeted effort toward the known injurious species within the affected or threatened states is appropriate and a different act would be much more effective.

Please contact me if you would like to follow-up on this matter.

Respectfully,

Dear Senator:

I would like to express my opposition to S.373

I feel that banning the importation of all species of the Genus Python, would be unnecessary. Granted some species in this genus have established populations in the United States. However, this is not the case for every species in this genus, nor would all species in this genus have the ability to establish wild populations.

As a veterinarian with a special interest in the medicine and surgery of all reptiles, I think this ban is over reaching and should be more targeted to the species of interest in this matter.

Respectfully,

You can read an opinion of the bill put together by the Pet Industry Joint Action Council at

<http://www.pijac.org/files/public/669Alert14April.pdf>

Issues like these are coming up on an ever more frequent basis. So, the ARAV Legislative/Animal Welfare Committee would like to get some of your opinions on these matters. Please take some time and let us know what you think of the following issues.

Do you support current importation of wild reptiles?

Are there any changes you would make to the current importation of reptiles?

Would you support a ban on the interstate transport of reptiles?

Do you support the ownership of potentially dangerous species (venomous reptiles, crocodilians)?

Do you have any ideas on controlling reptiles that have become invasive species?

Any other opinions are welcome as well.

You can send these opinions to the Legislative/Animal Welfare Committee

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Eric Klaphake – dreklaphake@msn.com

David Hannon - hannondvm@msn.com

With a copy to Wilbur Amand – ARAVETS@aol.com

Thank you for your time,

Jeff Baier MS, DVM

ARAV – President

Member – Legislative/Animal Welfare Committee

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