

MOTION ON NOTICE

3. Exotic Animal Amendments to Wildlife Act (VanRIMS No. 01-5500-20)

At the Regular Council meeting following the Standing Committee on Transportation and Traffic meeting on May 15, 2007, Councillor Capri submitted the following Motion. Councillor Stevenson called Notice under Section 5.4(c) of the Procedure By-law.

MOVER: Councillor Capri
SECONDER: Councillor Lee

WHEREAS many BC municipalities, including Vancouver, have enacted by-laws prohibiting the sale and ownership of exotic animals for reasons of public safety, health and animal welfare, there is no harmonized province-wide approach;

WHEREAS the Wildlife Act does not recognize exotic animals as "wildlife" and thus provides inadequate legislative authority for government to regulate;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Environment is currently considering amendments to the Wildlife Act to address the issue of alien and exotic species:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Union of BC Municipalities request that when making amendments to the Wildlife Act, the Ministry of Environment specifically regulate the keeping and sale of exotic animals in BC by including a list of exotics animals that are prohibited for keeping or sale in BC;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution be forwarded to other UBCM member municipalities and be forwarded to UBCM convention in September for endorsement.

notice

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Supplementary Material

The issue of exotic/wild animals in captivity warranted investigation because of ongoing pressure by the public, animal advocate groups and animal-related professional organizations that have raised concerns about the lack of regulations. Municipalities have often used the term exotic or wild animal in by-laws adopted to protect the welfare of such animals in captivity as well as public safety and health. As definitions of exotic, wild, prohibited and dangerous animals differ from one regulatory document to another, there is no harmonized list of which species are not appropriate for possession or sale. The Wildlife Act currently provides no direction for municipalities and some municipalities have no authority under their community charters. There is an opportunity for municipalities to work in partnership with the Ministry of Environment to ensure that uniform rules are effectively enforced.

Exotic/wild animals are obtained through an extensive network of pet stores, amateur owners, professional breeders and dealers that use advertising, personal contact, speciality magazines and the Internet to sell their product. Although many exotic/wild animals are bred in captivity, others are removed from their wild habitats in countries such as Asia, Africa, Latin America and Australia and either imported directly to Canada or re-exported from suppliers in the US. The following are the key arguments in favour of a ban. Exotic/wild animals:

- are threatened by trade,
- suffer during import/export,
- pose safety threat because some retain their defensive instincts and predatory nature,
- may carry transmittable diseases (i.e. salmonella),
- owners are uninformed,
- live long lives and out-live their owners,
- may be abandoned because they have lost their novelty appeal or become too big, difficult, expensive or problematic to care for, and
- may be released into the wild and consequently suffer as a result because they lack the physical and behavioural attributes necessary for survival in their foreign habitats.