



Helping Sanctuaries Help Animals

February 12, 2024

Brian Feldman, Chair
Cheryl Kagan, Vice-Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

To Chair Brian Feldman, Vice Chair Cheryl Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS), appreciates the committee's consideration of SB.0547 to prohibit the use of elephants, nonhuman primates, big cats, and bears in traveling acts. I am writing today to express our continued support of these vital protections for the listed species and urge passage of this important legislation.

GFAS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded by leaders from global animal welfare organizations to fulfill the need to differentiate and support sanctuaries that provide the highest quality of care for animals and also exhibit operational excellence in safety, financial and governance practices.

Our accredited organizations are true sanctuaries that are made to bear the long-term financial burden of caring for animals once commercial operators— like traveling acts and exhibitors— use, abuse and deem them no longer profitable. These profiteers only value their bottom line, which puts animals and the public at risk. Wild animals are dangerous, and captive wild animals even more so as they've suffered intensive confinement and are broken mentally and physically. Captive animals used in traveling shows are made to endure an unnatural life of stressful containment, rigorous travel and performance rendering them highly unpredictable. As we've seen before, these animals often react in self-defense or out of frustration, which may lead to human injury or death. There is no amount of "training" or purported "bonding" that guarantees a wild animal's behavior.

Forcing wild animals into entertainment has increasingly lost public appeal and rightly so. We encourage Maryland to pass the aforementioned bill for the sake of the animals and for the safety of your state's citizens.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Valerie Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Valerie Taylor
Executive Director