

Phasing out exotic, dangerous pet ownership in Oregon passes Senate

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

SB 391 Not Retroactive; Will Prevent New Ownership of Certain Exotic Animals

SALEM, Ore. — Following a high profile accident in Connecticut involving a pet chimpanzee, the Senate passed legislation today to protect exotic animals and phase out Oregon's role in the permitting of exotic pets. Included under the new exotic-pets category are non-domestic cats, non-human primates, non-domestic dogs, crocodiles, and alligators.

“It is not unheard of for a former pet crocodile or alligator to be found wandering the streets in my district after they've been dumped in a local waterway,” said Senator Mark Hass (D-Beaverton), chief sponsor of the legislation. “Wild animals belong in the wild, not in a basement in Beaverton.”

Currently, Oregonians receive permits from the State Department of Agriculture for the keeping of exotic pets. SB 391 will move the majority of the permitting process to the USDA and give current owners up to a year to renew their permit and then discontinue issuing permits after that date.

“These animals pose a danger to our children, our domestic pets, and once cornered, our law enforcement officials don't have the appropriate training to deal with them,” said Senate Majority Leader Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin). “This is common sense legislation.”

SB 391 also prohibits the breeding of exotic animals, except for feline hybrids. Specifically exempted from the ban are animals kept by wildlife sanctuaries, law enforcement agencies, humane societies, animal shelters, and veterinary hospitals or clinics. The Humane Society of the United States has expressed their support for SB 391.

The bill will now go move to the House for consideration.

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