



Council Members,

Humane Society London & Middlesex is aware that the City of London is considering an exemption to the city's Animal Control By-Law regarding exotic animals in private zoos.

We ask that Council consider the below points before making an exemption to this by-law.

For over 120 years, HSLM has been the region's premier animal welfare organization, providing critical services to thousands of animals every year. With experience in municipal and provincial laws, we believe the regulation of exotic animals is important to the well-being of animals, and to the well-being of our community members.

The keeping of exotic animals poses a threat to public safety, with risk of disease transmission, escape and injury to handlers, and danger risks for the public. Exotic animals require specialized care and experienced handlers. Even with safeguards in place, and no previous history of aggressive behaviour, many wild animals have escaped and/or caused injury to handlers and the public. The City of London Animal Control By-Law effectively controls the well-documented risks posed by keeping exotic animals, including crocodilians and venomous snakes, to the health, safety and well-being of residents, the animals and the environment. The limited economic benefit of exotic animal businesses and organizations has been well documented and should not outweigh the risk to public safety and animal well-being.

Making an exception to the by-law in order to open a facility such as Reptilia will showcase wild animals to Londoners, undoubtedly igniting intrigue. This is likely to result in individuals seeking to own wild animals as pets. In London, we already struggle with animal surrenders. For many reasons, folks are finding it a challenge to care for their cats and dogs, and hundreds of these animals are currently in our crowded shelter waiting for a new home. If folks struggle to care for domestic animals, what will happen if they have a wild animal in need of expensive, specialized vet care?

Approving an exemption to our current Animal Control By-Law ultimately jeopardizes an effective by-law that protects both animals and our citizens.

At HSLM we strive to improve animal welfare in our community. As such, we request no exemption be made to this existing Animal Control By-Law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Ryall".

Steve Ryall
Executive Director
Humane Society London & Middlesex

Our mission is to lead London and Middlesex in building a humane and compassionate community for all animals.