

February 12, 2023

To: Mayor Morgan, Councillor Steven Hillier and Members of London City Council

Subject: Exotic Animals Establishments amendments to Animal Control Bylaw and Business Licensing Bylaw- February 14, 2023 Council meeting

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed changes to the Animal Control Bylaw PH-3 and Business Licensing Bylaw L.-131-16 that would allow the keeping of prohibited Class 7 animals in the City and establish a license category and regulations for exotic animal businesses.

As a resident of London, I believe that allowing exotic animals in commercial activities could promote the trade and keeping of such animals as pets, which would have negative impacts on the environment, conservation, and animal welfare. The Ontario government has limited ability to regulate these establishments, and most issues associated with exotic animals fall under the City's responsibility, which could be time-consuming and costly.

Moreover, no compelling case or evidence has been presented that small, private exotic animal establishments can be tourist attractions and generate meaningful economic benefits to the City. The claims by Reptilia that they serve an animal rescue function have been shown to be minimal, as the numbers of animals surrendered to them and rehomed are minimal.

Allowing the bylaw changes would be a step backwards, erasing the benefits achieved in the past through London City Council's actions, and would waste City staff time, resources, and taxpayer dollars. It would also diminish London's reputation as a modern and animal-friendly municipality.

I urge you to keep London a safe and humane place for both people and animals by rejecting the proposed bylaw changes.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,

Emma Thomas