

PE1400/N

Chris Hynd
Committee Assistant
Public Petitions Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP



2 October 2013

Dear Chris

PE 1400

Thank you for notifying OneKind that the Public Petitions Committee will consider petition PE1400 on the use of wild animals in circuses at its meeting on Tuesday 29 October.

We are pleased that the Scottish Government has now informed the Committee of its intention to consult on a possible ban on wild animal circuses. The Cabinet Secretary also indicated that this was his intention in a speech to the British Veterinary Association in June. We look forward to seeing the consultation published as soon as possible. OneKind remains concerned about the continued delay over this issue and the length of time it is taking for legal advice to be made available to Ministers. It appears to us that a ban on ethical grounds, on the same lines as the Fur Farming (Prohibition)(Scotland) Act 2002 would be entirely feasible and desirable.

Developments south of the border suggest that we can no longer be confident will maintain its commitment to a full ban on wild animals in circuses. A pre-legislative report by the Westminster EFRA Committee proposed that a ban might be confined to elephants and big cats. There is no scientific evidence to support this recommendation and it has been widely criticised. However it does indicate that the debate is not yet over in England and meanwhile there remains the possibility that circuses using wild animals might re-locate to Scotland unless timely action is taken.

OneKind appreciates that the Committee's time is precious and that Members may now be minded to close our petition. We feel that the Committee's involvement has been invaluable in securing the Scottish Government commitment to consult and, if that should be the decision on 29 October, we would like to thank Members for their consideration of this animal welfare issue.

Yours sincerely

Libby Anderson
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OneKind
www.onekind.org