

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Culture, Recreation & Tourism
For HB 3482

Compiled on: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 8:24 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: March 30, 2023 8:00 AM

Wilfred Ayers
Self
Waxahachie, TX
Greetings,

As a proud Texan and responsible animal owner, I oppose HB3482. The animals that I keep are kept securely, in a locking room, and inside a solid building which means there is primary, secondary, and even tertiary containment. Not only are the animals kept under three levels of containment, but the species included in this bill are already regulated by Texas Parks and Wildlife. This means I have to buy an annual permit, keep detailed records for review by TPWD if I sell any of those animals, and keep my animals securely contained. An animal from this list escaping is punishable by up to a year in prison. Texas cities and counties already possess the authority to regulate all of the species in this bill as they see fit. If there are problems, they can be addressed. This bill is nothing more than an effort to prod local authorities to pass overreaching bans that are not needed.

Since I am a responsible animal owner, HB3482 is an infringement on my personal freedoms and if passed I would be in constant fear and stress that my local lawmakers will ban my animals. When cities and counties begin getting notified, then bans will follow as knee-jerk reactions to these notifications since snakes are the most misunderstood and irrationally feared of all animals. When these animals are housed properly, there are no public safety risks. If someone is keeping these animals irresponsibly, they can be punished under multiple laws. Especially in Texas, I would hope legislators focus on punishing criminals and not overreaching to affect responsible citizens.

Unfortunately, collective punishment has become commonplace in government. We live in a time when one sensational story paints everyone involved in that same activity as a bad actor. With snakes, we hear of one person who is irresponsible so the general public thinks that is how we all act. On the contrary, reptiles (species included in this bill and others) are kept by over 1.5 million Texans, and most owners are responsible. Do not make an un-American decision by passing this piece of collective punishment legislation. Vote no to HB3482 and protect responsible Texans and our freedoms. Have a good day.

Daniel Hoke, Mr.

Self

Fort Worth, TX

As a proud Texan and responsible animal owner, I oppose HB3482. The snakes that I keep are in secure cages, in a locking room, and inside a solid building which means there is primary, secondary, and even tertiary containment. Not only are the snakes kept under three levels of containment, but the species of snakes included in this bill are regulated by Texas Parks and Wildlife. This means I have to buy an annual permit, keep detailed records for review by TPWD if I sell any snakes, and keep my snakes securely contained. A snake escaping is punishable by up to a year in prison. Texas cities and counties already possess the authority to regulate all of the species in this bill as they see fit. If there are problems, they can be addressed. This bill is nothing more than an effort to prod local authorities to pass overreaching bans that are not needed.

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Mallory Cardner

Self- Commercial Insurance Agent

Brookshire, TX

I am adamantly opposed to this bill. There are hundreds of us that keep non native venomous snakes responsibly, and one reckless keeper's mistake should not be used to justify a bill like this. The antivenom requirement in this bill effectively creates a sweeping ban on non native venomous snakes that harms hundreds of venomous keepers and the thousands of non native venomous snakes between us. Hospitals don't typically stock foreign antivenom as it is considered an investigational new drug that is not approved by the FDA. Euthanizing the THOUSANDS of non native snakes in this state because of this antivenom requirement would cost taxpayers an enormous amount of money. Who pays for enforcement? Who pays for the drugs needed to euthanize thousands of non native venomous snakes? Furthermore, there have been ZERO bite injuries to the general public from a non native venomous snake. If the purpose of laws is to protect the public, we must look at the real threat level that exists to them, and it simply isn't enough to justify the expenses this bill would bring. Even in the case of the escaped forest cobra in Fort Worth, which prompted this bill, no one was bitten. Countless keepers rely on non native venomous snakes to educate the public. I am heavily involved in public education, and this would directly diminish my ability to educate about our non native venomous snakes. Countless keepers rely on non native venomous snakes to sustain their livelihoods. This bill would negatively impact countless businesses, countless responsible private keepers, and countless non native venomous snakes currently in the State of Texas. This does not protect the public, would cost massive amounts of taxpayer dollars, would face extreme resistance from those of us that possess these animals, would create an immediate black market for non native venomous snakes, would discourage legal keeping, would result in the euthanasia of thousands of animals, and would shut down countless businesses. This bill was written out of fear stemming from one unfortunate incident. This bill does not protect the public- we do that on our own as responsible keepers who far outnumber irresponsible keepers. Lastly, taking away our ability to keep these animals would absolutely eliminate my right to the pursuit of happiness. Keeping these animals safely brings me an immense amount of happiness, and losing these animals would be like losing my life's purpose. I have seen hundreds of hearts and minds changed about our venomous snakes through the education we provide. It's been a dream come true, and this bill would crush that dream. Please do not pass this bill. It would immediately harm thousands of animals, hundreds of responsible keepers and businesses, and does not protect or serve the general public in any way. The costs associated with something like this are not justified. This would harm all of us, so I respectfully urge you NOT to pass this bill.

Jerry Beck, Mr.

Self - Finance

Fort Worth, TX

OPPOSE HB 3482:

This bill adds unnecessary, useless, and wasteful bureaucracy to the government, hurting citizens and burdening government entities.

The funds needed to implement would be a complete waste of resources to ineffectively address a problem that is minor at most, and largely nonexistent.

There are far more serious and important problems in Texas - including dangerous and abused domestic dogs, general crime, deficient infrastructure, property tax relief, and illegal immigration. Government resources should be focused on solutions to important problems such as those, not wasted on trivial and mostly nonexistent "problems" such as this one.

It is widely recognized that radical animal rights extremists use bills such as this, based upon extensive misinformation and lies, as a starting point to try and implement far more severe restrictions related to mainstream animals. I wonder if that is the case here, and suspect that it may be. The overall spirit of the bill does not seem consistent with the freedom loving spirit of Texas.

Jeremy Robershaw

Self

New Braunfels, TX

This bill will hinder the livelihood of many responsible reptile keepers in Texas. We have been keeping and breeding venomous reptiles problem free for many years . I moved to Texas because of the current regulations that allow me to work with these animals in a responsible manor. I believe the way to handle this is to have the Reptile community work hand in hand with the state to possibly create an antivenin bank like Florida to provide antivenin in case of accident. Most of the laws that get put in place are by lack of understanding the animals and the people who work with them. I truly believe the state and the keepers can work together as a team to come up with solutions that would be beneficial for everyone and keep public safety number 1 priority. Thank you for your time.

Bonnie Trimbach

Best Exotics LLC

Naples, TX

There is no need to add nonindigenous snakes to this legislation. There is already a permit system in place that is over seen by the Texas Parks and Wildlife department. As a small business owner that deals in exotic mammals and reptiles we already have three permits with the state, plus multiple other permits with other states and federally. We have had our first responders out so they know what to do in case of an emergency. There are already bans in place in many counties and cities within the state in regards to venomous reptiles. I don't see the point of having even more legislation when there is already a system in place. This seems to be a waste of tax payer money which could be used on much more important items such as our infrastructure.

Kevin Galmon

self

Conroe, TX

My wife and I are responsible owners of a reticulated python. We believe that any further restriction or outright ban on these intelligent and wonderful animals will not curb or stop irresponsible owner behaviors. Contrary to the sensationalized videos on social media, the reptile community is full of responsible and caring keepers who don't deserve to have their animals banned. We have no problem with fining and punishing individuals who improperly care for or handle reptiles. These are more than just snakes to a majority of keepers, they are a part of the family.

Tyler Bates
Self
Rhome, TX

There have been no deaths related to the current laws in place, and there is no reason to amend the current laws. Everything currently in place effectively places any inherent risk solely on the individual. The laws in place have done well at preventing anybody within city limits from keeping any of the related animals from staying long term and should stay the way they currently are. There are a significant amount of benefits of keeping some of these animals in the private sector such as conservation and independent studies that contribute to scientific journals. These studies provide insight and valuable knowledge when it comes to understanding the animals and using their venoms for research purposes.

EARL JONES
LONE STAR REPTILES
ALVARADO, TX

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Joshua Roush
Self, Entrepreneur
Leander, TX

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Steve black
Usnarbc
spring branch, TX

As a proud Texan and responsible animal owner, I oppose HB3482. The snakes that I keep are in secure cages, in a locking room, and inside a solid building which means there is primary, secondary, and even tertiary containment. Not only are the snakes kept under three levels of containment, but the species of snakes included in this bill are regulated by Texas Parks and Wildlife. This means I have to buy an annual permit, keep detailed records for review by TPWD if I sell any snakes, and keep my snakes securely contained. A snake escaping is punishable by up to a year in prison. Texas cities and counties already possess the authority to regulate all of the species in this bill as they see fit. If there are problems, they can be addressed. This bill is nothing more than an effort to prod local authorities to pass overreaching bans that are not needed.

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Megan Russell
Self
Manor, TX

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Tracy Morris
Texas Primate Owners United
Rockport, TX

I have a little capuchin boy monkey. He's like a child to me if this is going to affect him and his well-being in my home, please do not pass this bill.

Sean Trimbach
Best Exotics LLC
Naples, TX

I Sean Trimbach, would like to voice my opposition to this legislation. The fact that there is already a permit system and current legislation in place to address the keeping of these animals makes this bill redundant and unnecessary. This will make it more difficult for those of us in the industry to continue to do business. Hospitals do not keep exotic antivenom and should not have to. It is up to us as responsible keepers to have our own supply on hand or have access to what we need prior to an incident. It should not be the state's responsibility to enforce us to be safe. We can do this on our own.

Thank you for your time.
Sean Trimbach

Tracy Morris
Self
Rockport, TX

I urge you NOT to support HB 3482 which among other things attempts to add the wording of “agents” to perform as the animal control authority in licensing under the long standing Texas Dangerous Wild Animals Act, (DWA).

This would allow for animal rights organizations to infiltrate these counties and further their anti-animal ownership agenda. The Texas Director for HSUS, Laura Looney, openly stated on March 18 last session that:

“We (HSUS) believe that it is local governments and local stakeholders and local experts who are best suited to determine whether or not an animal enterprise or business using working animals is in line with the best practices for their own individual communities.”

Only when it benefits their agenda will HSUS change the reason for laws. No solid stance, but only political flipping back and forth. HSUS told us they were targeting the exotic owners, (licensed ones) in Texas and are still wanting a “hit list” to go after them.

Section 240.001 of the Texas Government Code already gives authority to counties to add agents and/or “prohibit any nondomestic animal that the commissioners court of a county determines is dangerous and is in need of control in that county”.

Just as HSUS has stated, the past Texas Legislators agreed with this when they passed the DWA. Individual counties are best suited to draft their own regulations when dealing with such animals.

Snakes that are regulated by TWPDP under the “nondomestic animal that the commissioners court of a county determines is dangerous and is in need of control in that county” found at 31 TAC §§55.651-65.656: All non-indigenous (species not native to Texas) venomous snakes and the following constrictors: African rock python (*Python sebae*), Asiatic rock python (*Python molurus*), green anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*), reticulated python (*python reticulatus*), and southern African python (*Python natalensis*).

The Humane Society of the United States has a dearth history of corruption, deception, fraud and twisted tails. Some states have even taken a stand and backed out of legislation when they found out they (legislators) were misled., (see <https://nationalaw.org/hsus>)

I ask that you DO NOT SUPPORT HB 3482 by letting these activist groups mis-lead and infiltrate counties to further push their anti-animal ownership agenda.

Thank you,

Phillip Thompson

Self

Denton, TX

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K Webber

Self

Dallas, TX

I urge you NOT to support HB 3482 which among other things attempts to add the wording of “agents” to perform as the animal control authority in licensing under the long standing Texas Dangerous Wild Animals Act, (DWA).

Please do not support this.

Thank you.

Patricia Hartnett

Self

North Richland Hills, TX

This Bill has the potential to give animal rights groups and local authorities to expand restrictions on the possession of any animal or reptile.

Marc Cook
Self
Kaufman, TX

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This would allow for animal rights organizations to infiltrate these counties and further their anti-animal ownership agenda even further. The Texas Director for HSUS Laura Looney, openly stated on March 18 last session that:

“We, (HSUS) believe that it is local governments and local stakeholders and local experts who are best suited to determine whether or not an animal enterprise or business using working animals is in line with the best practices for their own individual communities.”

Only when it benefits their agenda will HSUS change the reason for laws. No solid stance, but only political flipping back and forth. And HSUS told us they were targeting the exotic, (licensed ones) in Texas and they were still wanting a “hit list” to go after them.

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I ask that you DO NOT SUPPORT HB 3482 by letting these activist groups mis-lead and infiltrate counties to further push their anti-animal ownership agenda.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Eric Clevenger

self

Kaufman, TX

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lyndsey Price
self
Pflugerville, TX

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Doug Terranova
Terranova Enterprises Inc.
Kaufman, TX

Honorable Chairman and Committee Members,

I write to you today to urge you to oppose HB 3482. The Dangerous Wild Animal Act has been in existence for close to 20 years now and it seems every session Radical Animal Rights Organizations try and “fine tune” it in order to take a little bit more of the human animal bond away. Strangely enough, this Bill was originally written by Texas Humane Legislative Network, and every session they come back because they believe it’s not working.

This session they want to add in reptiles, next session we will be back to primates. What’s worse is that, this session, they want to be able to “convince” or “offer” their services to the local animal control authorities in order to implement the act.

Putting an organization that is morally and politically opposed to the owning and keeping of exotic animals IN CHARGE of the inspection and permitting process is the true definition of putting the fox in charge of the henhouse!

I trust that, as in past sessions, common sense will prevail and the DWA will be left unchanged.

Thank you for your time and service to our State.

Lisa Lopez
Self
Kaufman, TX

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Thank you,

John Reinke
Self
Burkburnett, TX

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Snakes that are regulated by TWPDP under the “nondomestic animal that the commissioners court of a county determines is dangerous and is in need of control in that county” found at 31 TAC §§55.651-65.656: All non-indigenous (species not native to Texas) venomous snakes and the following constrictors: African rock python (*Python sebae*), Asiatic rock python (*Python molurus*), green anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*), reticulated python (*python reticulatus*), and southern African python (*Python natalensis*).

The Humane Society of the United States has a dearth history of corruption, deception, fraud and twisted tails. Some states have even taken a stand and backed out of legislation when they found out they (legislators) were misled., (see <https://nationalaw.org/hsus>)

I ask that you DO NOT SUPPORT HB 3482 by letting these activist groups mis-lead and infiltrate counties to further push their anti-animal ownership agenda.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please think before you vote
John Reinke

Anthony Dekker
Self
The Colony, TX

Good morning!

I just wanted to voice my concerns for the added regulation of the professional keeper and hobbyist for the reptile industry. I am adamantly opposed to this bill due to the added regulation that it imposes. Texas is a place of freedom of the individual. It is each keeper's responsibility to not impose on other people's rights. Any issues that come up due to irresponsible keeping these animals should be dealt with swiftly with the individual. If it is an individual safety concern for the individual keeping the animal that is on them and not for the government to regulate. It is not the job of the government to harm. Whole industries and their ability to keep these animals due to individuals being irresponsible. I'm asking that this committee destroy this bill. Do not let Texas become an over regulated state like California and keep safety and personal responsibility on the individual, do not regulate the masses for the few that create issues.

Thank you for your time.

-Anthony Dekker

Jackson Byars
Self
College Station, TX

As a proud Texan and responsible animal owner, I oppose HB3482. The snakes that I keep are in secure cages, in a locking room, and inside a solid building which means there is primary, secondary, and even tertiary containment. Not only are the snakes kept under three levels of containment, but the species of snakes included in this bill are regulated by Texas Parks and Wildlife. This means I have to buy an annual permit, keep detailed records for review by TPWD if I sell any snakes, and keep my snakes securely contained. A snake escaping is punishable by up to a year in prison. Texas cities and counties already possess the authority to regulate all of the species in this bill as they see fit. If there are problems, they can be addressed. This bill is nothing more than an effort to prod local authorities to pass overreaching bans that are not needed.

Since I am a responsible snake owner, HB3482 is an infringement on my personal freedoms and if passed I would be in constant fear and stress that my local lawmakers will ban my animals. When cities and counties begin getting notified, then bans will follow as knee-jerk reactions to these notifications since snakes are the most misunderstood and irrationally feared of all animals. When these animals are housed properly, there is no public safety risks. If someone is keeping these snakes irresponsibly, he can be punished under multiple laws. Especially in Texas, I would hope legislators focus on punishing criminals and not overreaching to affect responsible citizens.

Unfortunately, collective punishment has become commonplace in government. We live in a time when one sensational story paints everyone involved in that same activity as a bad actor. With snakes, we hear of one person who is irresponsible so the general public thinks that is how we all act. To the contrary, reptiles (species included in this bill and others) are kept by over 1.5 million Texans, and most owners are responsible. Do not make an un-American decision by passing this piece of collective punishment legislation. Vote no to HB3482 and protect responsible Texans and our freedoms. Have a good day.

Zoe Dotson
self
College Station, TX

Vote NO! Unfortunately, collective punishment has become commonplace in government. We live in a time when one sensational story paints everyone involved in that same activity as a bad actor. With snakes, we hear of one person who is irresponsible so the general public thinks that is how we all act. To the contrary, reptiles (species included in this bill and others) are kept by over 1.5 million Texans, and most owners are responsible. Do not make an un-American decision by passing this piece of collective punishment legislation. Vote no to HB3482 and protect responsible Texans and our freedoms. Have a good day.

Frances Dotson
Self
College Station, TX

As a proud Texan and responsible animal owner, I oppose HB3482. Unfortunately, collective punishment has become commonplace in government. We live in a time when one sensational story paints everyone involved in that same activity as a bad actor. To the contrary, reptiles (species included in this bill and others) are kept by over 1.5 million Texans, and most owners are responsible. Do not make an un-American decision by passing this piece of collective punishment legislation. Vote no to HB3482 and protect responsible Texans and our freedoms

Jaime Wilson
self
Alvin, TX

Hello,
I am taking the time to write to you today and beg of you to please OPPOSE this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.
Your constituent,
Jaime Wilson

Jay Dotson

Self

College Station, TX

As a proud Texan and responsible animal owner, I oppose HB3482. Unfortunately, collective punishment has become commonplace in government. We live in a time when one sensational story paints everyone involved in that same activity as a bad actor. To the contrary, reptiles (species included in this bill and others) are kept by over 1.5 million Texans, and most owners are responsible. Do not make an un-American decision by passing this piece of collective punishment legislation. Vote no to HB3482 and protect responsible Texans and our freedoms