



Feline Conservation Federation

www.FelineConservation.org

Director of Legislation: Robert Johnson - legislation@felineconservation.org

June 20, 2012

The Honorable Doc Hastings, Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hastings,

On behalf of the Feline Conservation Federation (FCF), I write to you today to make clear our opposition to H.R. 4122, the "Big Cats and Public Safety Protection Act", as introduced.

Begun in the 1950's, the FCF is the nation's oldest organization dedicated to wild feline conservation through in-situ conservation efforts, captive husbandry and public education. The FCF has provided hundreds of thousands of dollars to help conserve wild cats in their natural environments. Much of this work is being guided by our scientific advisor and head of the internationally renowned Small Cat Conservation Alliance, Dr. Jim Sanderson.

Due to the rampant disappearance of many wild feline species, the FCF advocates the preservation of the important genetic variability of these species through proper captive breeding at qualified facilities. The FCF membership represents by far the largest collective group of exotic felines in the world.

We feel that the passage of H.R. 4122 would lead to outcomes contrary to the bill's intended purpose. A primary concern is the prevention of illegal trafficking as a primary foundation for this legislation. This is a very flimsy premise as there have been no documented instances of tigers born in the U.S. entering the black market. H.R. 4122 would therefore not be effective in this stated purpose, but would in fact prevent legitimate private facilities and organizations from their very real conservation and education efforts.

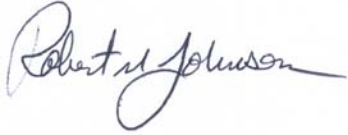
H.R. 4122 also seeks to ignore the validity of the inspection process by a federal agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and offers exemptions to a single private trade association, the Associations of Zoos and Aquariums(AZA). In addition to preventing current USDA licensed zoological facilities from access to animals for exhibition and breeding purposes, the bill provides a gaping loophole by exempting non-regulated and non-licensed breeders and sanctuaries.

The FCF appreciates Congressman Mckee's interest in establishing conservation law, but we respectfully ask for your opposition of this bill. Not only does it not appropriately address the intended issues, H.R. 4122 will adversely affect legitimate federally licensed and

inspected businesses as well as real life wildlife conservation efforts.
I would be happy address any questions or comments,
legislation@felineconservation.org

Thank you for your help and for your works.

Sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert M. Johnson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Robert M. Johnson
Director of Legislation
Feline Conservation Federation