

**PE1400/J**

**Rural and Environment Directorate**  
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Anne Peat  
Public Petitions Committee  
Scottish Parliament  
T3.40  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

20<sup>th</sup> December 2012

Dear Ms Peat,

### **CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1400**

Thank you for your letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> December regarding this petition, in which you ask the Scottish Government, in light of the new licensing regulations for England, to set out its commitment to a ban on the use of wild animals in circuses that come to Scotland.

I am aware that there is some concern amongst animal welfare organisations that this development may push circuses currently based in England over the border into Scotland. While I can give no commitment to a ban at present, you may like to be aware that the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Defra recently wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment. The letter outlined Defra's plans to introduce primary legislation to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses and offered to extend the scope of that legislation to Scotland.

This is an offer that is being seriously considered; however, clarification of the legalities of a ban in Scotland and proper consultation remain the first steps before any legislative action can be taken, and there are, of course, processes that would need to be followed to allow Defra to draft legislation on behalf of the Scottish Government. Unfortunately we are still awaiting clarification of the legalities surrounding a ban on wild animals in travelling circuses in Scotland; however I am hopeful that we will obtain that clarification in the New Year and that plans can then be put in place for a consultation on the matter.

I hope that I may have something more concrete to convey over the next few months.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Beverley Williams**  
Animal Welfare Team Leader