

## *Tracy M. Barker*

*Vida Preciosa International, Inc. PO Box 300, Boerne, TX 78006 (830) 537-5000*

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**To the House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife:**

**Re: HR-669**

To introduce myself, I am a 51 year old mother of two boys 12 and 14, happily married for 19 years. I grew up in Washington D.C., where my father spent his career as Curator of Ceramics and Glass at the Smithsonian Institution. I attended the Sidwell Friends School from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through my graduation in 1976.

I had my first exposure to Science at Sidwell. I still remember my 3<sup>rd</sup> grade science teacher, Ms. Woods. She taught us biology; looking back, I realize that it was actually quite sophisticated biology. She instilled in us to always question, observe, and study the facts. She inspired in us to pursue any subject that held our interest.

Third grade biology sparked an interest I carried through high school and on to an undergraduate degree in psychology studying animal behavior, and a graduate degree in biology.

My specialty is herpetology, the study of reptiles and amphibians. Herpetology has taken me around the world from Panama to New Zealand. I have studied animals in the wild and I have studied animals in captivity. I have written numerous papers in scientific journals. The most recent book my husband and I wrote was awarded a gold medal from the Independent Publishers, recognized as the best animal book of 2006.

I have worked intensively with pythons for the past 30 years. It is with this experience that I come to you. I have tremendous respect for you, your experiences, and your careers in legislation.

I understand that the Subcommittee of Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife of House Natural Resources of the House Natural Resources committee is scheduled to have a hearing on H.R.669. The passing of this bill would essentially ban all nonnative species from the United States and prohibit any trade in those species within the United States. This includes all nonnative pet fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals.

I am sure that when you consider proposed legislation, that you want the facts, the real facts, not an agenda. I am here to give you real information that I hope you will take into consideration before making any decision regarding this bill.

It comes down to the following:

1. If you want the education and experience of animals for the children in your respective States to only be from a TV or photos in books—vote for this bill.
2. If you are comfortable looking at your grandchildren and telling them YOU helped end what might be the ONLY way to insure that these animals will exist in the future for their children—vote for this bill.

3. If you are comfortable having MANY of your constituents lose their life works, their investments, their jobs, their life savings, and their businesses, along with countless other Americans throughout the continental U.S. —vote for this bill.
4. If you want to be responsible for the END of the self-sustaining, viable, ancillary populations of all the animal species currently in captivity, one of the great conservation achievements of the past several decades—vote for this bill.
5. There is a human population explosion around the world, the worldwide loss of habitats and unbalancing of ecosystems, and everywhere hungry protein-poor people consume essentially all wildlife in their reach. If you don't believe in breeding species in captivity and you believe that captive-bred animals should be completely removed from the safety of captivity and all species relegated to this troubled natural world—vote for this bill.
6. If you have some plan of what to do with the tens of millions of pet fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals currently maintained in captivity in 49 US states once they are made illegal to possess, breed or transport—vote for this bill.
7. Make no bones about this, if 1) you want to support an animal rights agenda and 2) if you want to support a continual dumping of federal funds into ill-conceived and poorly managed “Invasive Alien Species” projects—vote for this bill.

**This bill will affect a hundred million Americans**, from children to our most august zoological institutions. This bill will destroy thousands of small American businesses in a time of the worst economic disaster in our Nation's history.

- 1) If you acknowledge that work on a “Green Planet” agenda is a critical one; that it involves not just people on this planet, but also insuring a future for as many species of plants and wildlife as possible—DO NOT vote in support of this bill.
- 2) If you acknowledge that the people of your State and of this Nation have a huge capacity to aid in the preservation of hundreds of species into the future at NO cost to tax payers and government entities—DO NOT vote in support of this bill.
- 3) Please acknowledge that beyond the conservation value of maintaining species in captivity, it is from captive populations of animals that most behavioral and many biological, and biochemical discoveries are made. If you accept that the maintenance of as many species as possible maximizes the possibilities of future scientific discoveries.—DO NOT vote in support of this bill.
- 4) If you believe that a small group of people with their own prejudicial agenda should not have the right to determine what species will exist into the future and what won't survive—DO NOT vote in support of this bill.
- 5) Please realize that government biologists and contracted biologists see this as a cash-cow. If this passes, they will have sole “ownership and control” of all nonnative species; they expect to receive millions of dollars of federal support to study the “alien invaders” problem. Considering the possibility that their interest in this is self-serving, please DO NOT vote in support of this bill.

- 6) Don't give up your credibility to the cash-rich, zealous animal rights activists and their agenda—DO NOT vote for this bill. Captivity is the salvation and the future for many species of animals, not the curse.

**H.R.-669, in any form, will alienate countless numbers of Americans from their government.** It amounts to a totalitarian ban generated by the animal-rights movement. It is not based in science or conservation. If there was ever a bill worthy of review by *60 Minutes*, *Dateline*, or *20/20*, this is it.

There is a willing, participating constituency that will work with legislators at all levels to create regulations that support the rights, interests, efforts, and accomplishments of so many Americans. I understand and support real science based on research and data. I cannot support the prejudice, forgone conclusions, and fantasy that lace the arguments of the environmental organizations and invasion biologists.

Please consider this to be one of the most important votes of your career, please DO NOT vote in support of H.R. 669.

I am happy to answer any and all questions you may have regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



Tracy M. Barker  
Vida Preciosa International, Inc.  
vpi@beecreek.net  
830-832-0751