



**PET INDUSTRY JOINT
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PIJAC CONTINUES LEADING FIGHT AGAINST HR 669,
NONNATIVE WILDLIFE INVASION PREVENTION ACT,
AS CEO TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE**

If Passed in Current Form, 669 Could Negatively Impact Pet Businesses and More Than One Third of the US Population

Washington, DC, April 23, 2009 – Marshall Meyers, CEO and General Counsel of the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC), testified before a Congressional Committee this morning regarding HR 669, the Nonnative Wildlife Invasion Prevention Act. Meyers, representing pet owners and the pet industry, spoke against the bill in its current form, explaining why, if passed, it could have devastating affects on pet owners, and the pet industry.

Anyone owning pet fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians, small mammals, or invertebrates could be affected by this bill, as would companies selling pet products or services. This bill would ban nonnative species of wildlife not specifically approved by US Fish & Wildlife Service. Apart from dogs, cats and goldfish, virtually every species falls under the tarp created by HR 669.

In his written testimony submitted to the House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife, Meyers stated, “We support the development of a strategic, risk-based process to prevent the introduction of invasive species (harmful nonnative species) into the United States.” However, the current draft of HR 669 “fails to be strategic in that it does not adequately take socio-economic issues and risk management options into account,” and would “require funds and staffing not currently available, nor likely to be available, to the US Fish and Wildlife Service.” Unfortunately, if passed, the existing bill could result in the mass release and/or euthanasia of pets.

According to the bill, if an animal is not on an Approved List, it would be banned for possession (unless you could prove you owned it prior to a risk assessment), breeding, sale, trade, or movement between states. So, if an unapproved pet species of fish reproduced in your aquarium, you’d be in criminal violation of the law. Likewise, if your son or daughter owned an unapproved species and you had to relocate to another state, you’d be in criminal violation if you took the pet with you.

Testifying before the Subcommittee, Meyers reiterated the pet industry’s interest in working with authors of the bill to craft more realistic legislation that serves the public and affected industries alike. He offered, “I propose getting the stakeholders together after this hearing to review the bill section by section, to see what needs to be re-worked and how to re-work it.” Meyers also submitted comments from more than twenty organizations as examples of the thousands of letters expressing concerns about the bill. In addition, a report from a multi-stakeholder workshop convened by PIJAC last month was submitted into the record.

Subcommittee Chairwoman, and author of the bill, Madeleine Z. Bordallo (NP-Guam), acknowledged, “We recognize the bill is by no means perfect, and that changes will be needed to address various concerns before any legislation moves forward.” Subcommittee member Eni F.H. Faleomavaega (NP – American Samoa), a co-sponsor of the bill, congratulated Meyers and the pet industry for the tremendous grassroots response that has been generated, noting that it is important to have input from constituents on these issues.

(more)

Following the hearing, Meyers noted, “It is clear that Committee members from both sides of the aisle heard from the pet-owning public about their concerns with this bill. PIJAC will continue working with members of the Committee, the Executive Branch, and other stakeholders to ensure the process proceeds in a transparent, inclusive, and strategic manner.”

For more information on PIJAC’s position, as well as Meyers’s full written testimony, please visit PIJAC’s HR 669 Forum at www.pijac.org/governmentaffairs/hr669forum.asp.

For media interviews, please contact Meyers at 202-256-6726.

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Since 1970, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) has protected pets and the pet industry – promoting responsible pet ownership and animal welfare, fostering environmental stewardship, and ensuring the availability of pets. PIJAC members include retailers, companion animal suppliers, manufacturers, wholesale distributors, manufacturers’ representatives, pet hobbyists, and other trade organizations. Through the combined voice of these people, PIJAC serves the best interests of the entire pet industry. For more information, please visit www.pijac.org.