



HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER PYTHON BAN

***** ACTION NEEDED NOW! *****

Markup session set for 1:00pm July 28

Full Hearing set for July 29 or 30

The Issue.

Representative Kendrick Meek (D-FL) has introduced H.R. 2811 (the House version of Senator Nelson's Senate Bill S.373). As drafted, it would amend the Lacey Act to add "the constrictor snake of the species Python genera" as an injurious species that would be "prohibited from being shipped or imported into the United States."

H.R. 2811 Markup Session is set for 1:00pm tomorrow, July 28. The Full Hearing will be July 29 or 30.

We cannot wait! YOU NEED TO ACT NOW!

Adding "Python genera" to the injurious wildlife list under the Lacey Act has far broader consequences than indicated by the bill's language, prohibiting specimens of "the constrictor snake" (presumably a reference to Burmese Pythons) being "shipped to or imported into the United States." A Lacey Act listing, in addition to banning importation into the United States, prohibits export and interstate movement. To further compound the proposed listing, it lumps numerous species of Pythons into inaccurate taxonomic nomenclature by referring to "Python genera" rather than referencing a specific species. In short, it is not clear if only "pythons" of the genus Python would be listed or every snake commonly referred to as a python would fall under the umbrella of taxonomic confusion.

Once H.R. 2811 passes Markup it will go to the floor of the House of Representatives for consideration. The Meeks ban, like Senator Nelson's Senate Bill 373, would circumvent the statutory listing process called for by the Lacey Act. To list a species under the Lacey Act, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is required to conduct a risk analysis and seek public comment prior to making a final determination that a species should be listed as "injurious." The USFWS process is currently underway. Thus, is H.R. 2811 intentionally designed to bypass a transparent, stakeholder-inclusive, science-based process?

As drafted, H.R. 2811 will likely ban all pythons, including ball pythons – the most popular and widely possessed Python species. If H.R. 2811 goes forward it needs to be amended to address the one species of concern – Burmese pythons in a scientifically-credible manner. There is absolutely no justification for banning all Pythons.



What Can You Do?

Call, email and fax your concerns to every member of the House Judiciary Committee **NOW - - HESITATION COULD = BAN!**

Take time to contact their District Offices. You can obtain their District Office telephone and fax numbers from the House Judiciary Committee website (<http://judiciary.house.gov/about/members.html>).

Also, to easily contact both members of the Judiciary Committee, as well as your own representative, visit PIJAC's [Legislative Action Center](http://www.pijac.org/governmentaffairs) on the PIJAC website (<http://www.pijac.org/governmentaffairs>) to learn how.

Forward this PetAlert to other like-minded people. Ask them to **ACT NOW!**

Please send PIJAC copies of any written submissions as well as keep us informed of any responses you receive from Congress.

Points to be highlighted:

- If H.R. 2811 is enacted as drafted, tens of thousands of American pet owners, hobbyists, and business owners across the country will be adversely impacted.
- There is no scientific justification at this time for banning any species of Python; not every species is the same and there is a large difference between the Burmese python that is found in the Everglades and other Python species commonly possessed by reptile keepers and pet owners. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has a credible science-based review process underway that should not be circumvented by simply imposing a Congressional ban.
- H.R. 2811 should be amended to address Burmese Pythons in a scientifically credible manner. Priority needs to be given to controlling the existing population in the Everglades – resources are needed for developing baits and traps.
- If the Congress decides to ban Burmese Pythons, it should limit the ban to importation of that species into the United States.
- To prevent release of currently owned Burmese pythons into the environment, provisions should be in final law to permit interstate movement of existing U.S. population of Burmese pythons, subject to housing such animals in secure enclosures and compliance with all applicable State and local requirements and best management practices for housing and maintaining large constrictors.
- The final law should also include provisions for financial support to the USFWS and partners to expand the reptile component of the Habitattitude™ campaign to educate reptile owners not to release their unwanted pets.

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