



**PET INDUSTRY JOINT  
ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
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TESTIMONY OF THE PET INDUSTRY JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL  
FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE MAINE JOINT COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
IN OPPOSITION TO LD 199

To be considered February 10, 2021

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Position: OPPOSED

LD 199 , through the changing of a single word, would create a situation in which Maine consumers, not just wildlife collectors, would be required to obtain a collection permit from the commissioner.

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) appreciates the opportunity to offer our views regarding LD 199, a bill that would create a requirement that all Maine consumers wishing to purchase legally collected reptiles or amphibians would themselves have to obtain a collectors permit. As the country's largest pet trade association, representing the interests of all segments of the pet industry throughout the United States, PIJAC counts among its members national associations, organizations, corporations and individuals involved in the commercial pet trade. More specifically, PIJAC represents the interests of breeders, pet stores, suppliers, distributors, pet supply manufacturers, retailers and pet owners throughout the state of Maine and across the country.

Let me start by saying that PIJAC is committed to the conservation of threatened or endangered species. We have for many years provided a well-respected animal care certification program that is widely utilized by not only persons in the commercial pet trade but shelters, humane societies and institutes of higher education as well. Our association has long been recognized as the voice for a responsible pet trade, and we routinely advocate legislative and regulatory proposals establishing governmental mandates where appropriate to advance the public interest and welfare of pets and the environment. PIJAC works closely with US Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior and CITES to ensure effective enforcement of the federal Animal Welfare Act, management of threatened or endangered species and control of invasive species, and have since its inception. We regularly work with federal and state agencies as well as local governments to advance animal welfare and environmental interests.

PIJAC members not only contribute large amounts of money to fund habitat restoration and sustainable use projects, they heavily fund efforts to successfully captive breed species that are under pressure in the wild. In fact, it is aquarium hobbyists that are directly responsible for the continued existence of many species of African fish that are now considered extinct in the wild due to habitat degradation but are thriving in the trade. This bill would make trade in similarly pressured species illegal, meaning that breeders would be unable to trade breeding stock or sell them, guaranteeing continued declines in their populations.

We are greatly concerned that the legislature is considering this action. While requiring collection permits for the taking of wildlife is appropriate for some species, requiring that consumers or hobbyists

wishing to purchase legally collected specimens as companion animals or breeding stock does not. Further, such a requirement is likely to cause currently legal owners of such animals to release them into the wild. This is an activity that PIJAC, through our Habitatitude partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works hard to discourage, and one that have a detrimental effect on the ecosystem.

The responsible course of action is to continue to require collection permits, but not to expand the requirement for those permits in a way that impacts Maine consumers.

Please vote NO on LD 199.

Thank you for considering our concerns.

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