

March 20, 2019

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE AB 467: Competitions on state property: prize compensation: gender equity.

Very Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez,

We noticed AB 467 in time to reach you about issues in this code involving animals, and will send separate correspondence to Assemblymember Horvath. You already know how grateful we are for your work for animals, so please accept these comments to follow as an ideal that we hold for California, and the never-ending quest for it.

In bringing gender equity to humans with AB 467, we have overlooked the lives and livelihood of our precious animals, their habitat and the environment. **Humans do not have the right to exploit and kill animals for entertainment.** To the animal advocate, a bird or a frog deserves the right to live and thrive as equally as a tiger, elephant, dog or cat. We can call it species equity. AB 467 provides an opportunity to repeal §2003 (b)(c) and (d). If that is not possible, then **we strongly suggest that (c) and (d) be repealed.**

§2003(d) is almost antithetical to your efforts with AB 273. I notice that the animals are classified as game birds and mammals, not nongame. Nonetheless, from an animal protection perspective, this is sending a competing message to the advances we hope to see passed with AB 273.

Now, regarding frogs. Please see the attached article from Voice of America titled, "[Popular 'Jumping Frogs' Contest Angers Environmentalists, Animal Activists](#)." The author explains that contestants are using bullfrogs which are not native to California, then release them into the wild. The use of the frogs spreads disease, native frogs and their habitat suffer when bullfrogs are released, the bullfrogs suffer during shipment and transportation, **and** we are sending a message to children that entertainment at the expense of animals is commendable. It is not.

Please rethink AB 467. It's not too late to amend the language to save animal lives. From our perspective, **the pain, suffering and death of any human or nonhuman animal outranks gender equality in prize monies every day of the week.**

Please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for the opportunity to speak for those who otherwise have no voice: **the frogs, birds, bunnies and fishes.**

Sincerely,



René Rowland, Chair
PawPAC

PawPAC | P.O. Box 4635 Downey, CA 90241 | 877.484.2364 | www.pawpac.org

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PawPAC

Working for Animals and Their Environment Since 1980

March 20, 2019

The Honorable Tasha Boerner Horvath
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 4130
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE AB 467: Competitions on state property: prize compensation: gender equity.

Dear Assemblymember Horvath,

We noticed AB 467 in time to reach you about issues in this code involving animals, and will send separate correspondence to Assemblymember Gonzalez. PawPAC is extremely pleased to see you join the Assembly, so please accept these comments to follow as an ideal that we hold for California, and the never-ending quest for it.

In bringing gender equity to humans with AB 467, we have overlooked the lives and livelihood of our precious animals, their habitat and the environment. **Humans do not have the right to exploit and kill animals for entertainment.** To the animal advocate, a bird or a frog deserves the right to live and thrive as equally as a tiger, elephant, dog or cat. We can call it species equity. AB 467 provides an opportunity to repeal §2003 (b)(c) and (d). If that is not possible, then **we strongly suggest that (c) and (d) be repealed.**

We are looking forward to the passage of Assemblymember Gonzalez' AB 273 to ban trapping of nongame and fur-bearing mammals, yet §2003(d) is almost antithetical to that effort. This is sending a competing message to the advances AB 273 promises.

Now, regarding frogs. Please see the attached article from Voice of America titled, "[Popular 'Jumping Frogs' Contest Angers Environmentalists, Animal Activists.](#)" The author explains that contestants are using bullfrogs which are not native to California, then release them into the wild. The use of the frogs spreads disease, native frogs and their habitat suffer when bullfrogs are released, the bullfrogs suffer during shipment and transportation, *and* we are sending a message to children that entertainment at the expense of animals is commendable. It is not.

Please rethink AB 467. It's not too late to amend the language to save animal lives. From our perspective, **the pain, suffering and death of any human or nonhuman animal outranks gender equality in prize monies every day of the week.**

Please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for the opportunity to speak for those who otherwise have no voice: the frogs, birds, bunnies and fishes.

Sincerely,



René Rowland, Chair
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Working for Animals and Their Environment Since 1980

NEWS

Popular 'Jumping Frogs' Contest Angers Environmentalists, Animal Activists - 2003-01-09

October 26, 2009 8:31 PM

Each year, the Jumping Frogs contest in Calaveras County, California, draws more than 40,000 visitors. But this popular contest draws criticism as well. Scientists say competition, habitat loss, climate change and windblown pesticides are devastating frog species throughout the region. And animal rights advocates say the contest is inhumane and cruel.

As many as 2,000 frogs compete each May at the Frogtown Fairgrounds in Calaveras County, Angel Camp, California. The Frog Jump draws participants from around the world and is open to fairgoers of all ages. In fact, a few years ago, the Grand Finals Frog Jump winner was a 3-year-old boy from Sacramento, California.

The contest was inspired by Mark Twain's 1865 fictional short story, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*. The first real frog-jumping contest was organized in 1928 to celebrate the paving of Angel Camp's Main Street. Over the years, the contest has become the most popular attraction at the Angel Camp annual fair, which also includes music, a craft show, local talent and the Miss Calaveras Scholarship Pageant.

Today, some of the sidewalks of the city are lined with painted green frogs and bronze plaques, modeled on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

The world record holder of the Jumping Contest is a frog named "Rosie the Ribiter," who made close to a six-meter triple jump in 1986. Since then, a \$5,000 prize has been offered for any frog that can break that record. But those hoping to see the winning frogs may be out of luck, because most of the participating frogs disappear after the contests.

"The only negative side that the Department of Fish and Game sees is that the participants release the bullfrogs after the contest is over. And that creates some problems that are ecological in nature," says Ed Pert, of the California Department of Fish and Game. For many years, organizers of the Calaveras County fair urged participants to carefully put the frogs back into the wild after the annual contest. But Ed Pert explains that is illegal in California.

"Part of the reason why there are problems with people returning frogs to the wild is that there is a disease issue to be considered," he said. "Bringing frogs together to mingle with other frogs can spread diseases. I would like also to mention that the frogs that are used in the contest are bullfrogs, which are not native to California, they are native to the eastern United States, east of the Rocky Mountains. And we have native frogs, which are negatively impacted by bullfrogs. So, putting them [the non-native frogs] back in the wild has multiple problems with our native species."

Technically, violators could face up to a \$5,000 fine and one year in jail. But officials would like to solve the problem, rather than prosecute participants. They are scrambling to come up with an alternative before this May's contest. According to Ed Pert says they're exploring various possibilities.

"I think that one of the possible solutions could include having some sort of frog refuge, so that there could be contestants that would get frogs from certain places, using them in the contest. And then return them to this particular refuge which is not considered to be sensitive for native habitat," he said.

The California Department of Fish and Game has assured Calaveras County that it does not want to abolish the Jumping Frog contest. Local officials see it as a real boom to the area's economy, which is based mainly on tourism.

But abolishing the contest is the ultimate goal for the Animal Protection Institute, an 80,000-member group based in Sacramento. The animal rights advocates believe frogs should not be taken from their habitats for human entertainment. They also believe that the Jumping Frog contest is in conflict with what modern-day educators should teach children.

"These poor frogs are sort of dragged out of nature and then made to jump on command, more or less, on a stage in front of a big crowd of people in the summer sun. This, to any animal rights activist, is cruel and unnecessary," says Larisa Bryski, one of the animal rights activists.

It is interesting to note that Ms. Bryski was the 1988 Miss Calaveras County and used to participate in the frog contest. So what made her change her mind? "As a little girl growing up in Calaveras County, it was just a part of the summer tradition that everybody goes to the Calaveras County Fair," she answers. "And one thing that I did a lot with my little friends back then, is participate in the frog jump competition. And I really didn't think anything about it. When I moved out and looked back I realized how silly and unnecessary it was and I felt really that if I could look and realize how ridiculous it is, maybe I can help open the eyes of a few other people along the way. So, I basically learned from my own mistakes."

Warren "Buck" King, the unofficial "Frogtown Mayor" who manages the Calaveras County Fair, has been involved with the fair and jumping contest for 32 years.

Trying to contain the most recent wave of criticism against the contest, Mr. King says: "Since 1928, this is our 75th anniversary at Frogtown and I just think that people will back us and support our event. I think that common sense will prevail but when Fish and Game [Department] gets involved, that concerns me. Sometimes Fish and Game does a very good job, but sometimes you let Mother Nature handle things."

Mr. King has invited the animal rights activists to visit the fairgrounds and see how well the frogs are treated. He says that a "frog welfare policy" was adopted in 1997, requiring humane capture, care and release of the frogs, and banning participants who knowingly violate the policy or otherwise abuse frogs. After all, according to Warren King, it is the frog that has made Calaveras County famous.
