



## SB 313 – Circus Cruelty Prevention Act

### Summary

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SB 313 protects wild or exotic animals by prohibiting them from traveling to perform acts that affect their well-being.

### Background

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Circuses travel nearly year-round, in all weather extremes, sometimes for days at a time. While in transit, the animals are confined to trailers or trucks, where they may not have access to basic necessities, such as food, water, and veterinary care. Elephants are chained, and big cats are imprisoned in cramped, filthy cages, in which they eat, drink, sleep, defecate, and urinate—all in the same place. And there's no relief once the animals reach a venue, where they remain caged and are chained in arena basements and parking lots.

Bears, tigers, elephants, and other wild animals exploited in traveling acts don't ride bicycles, jump through hoops, or balance on pedestals because they want to. They perform these and other difficult tricks because they're afraid of what will happen if they don't. To force animals to perform, circus trainers abuse them with whips, muzzles, electric prods, bullhooks (heavy batons with a sharp steel hook on one end that are illegal in California), and other weapons that cause them pain.

### Why this bill is needed

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Government oversight of training methods is virtually non-existent. Circuses are transient. They move quickly from city to city and easily evade law enforcement. Local animal control officers typically lack the specialized knowledge and training needed to recognize an ailing wild or exotic animal and the resources and expertise needed to take action.

Public demand for cruelty-free circuses continues to grow. Wild animals also pose an inordinate danger to public safety. If they feel threatened or frightened, they will act on their natural instincts—and when a bear, a big cat, or an elephant rebels, trainers can't always protect themselves or the public.

SB 313 applies to a tailored list of wild and exotic animals who are inherently unsuitable for a transient lifestyle. Wild animals are innately driven to behave as they would in their natural homes—the rich ecosystems in which their species evolved over millennia. When they're denied any semblance of a natural life, they suffer physically and psychologically. This measure recognizes both the animal welfare concerns and public safety concerns of circuses and other traveling shows that force wild or exotic animals to perform. This bill protects many species such as elephants, monkeys, bears, and tigers from being forced to perform. Any person that violates the provisions of this section, or any rule or regulation promulgated pursuant thereto, shall be fined a civil penalty not to exceed twenty-five thousand dollars for each violation.

### Support

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Social Compassion in Legislation (Sponsor)  
PETA (Sponsor)  
General Counsel for Animal Defenders

### Staff Contact

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