Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee
Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Scotland) Bill
Written submission from Karen McKenzie

Ethical basis for a ban

- An ethically based Bill is entirely reasonable given the strength of public opinion and consistent support for a ban. The last Scottish consultation showed 98% support a ban.

- The tricks which animals are trained to perform are neither natural movements for the animals, nor educational for those watching them. Circus animal acts do not teach respect for animals or appreciation of the species with whom we share our planet; in fact, they teach the opposite.

- Circuses also do little to educate their audience about the natural behaviour of the wild animals on display, or their conservation.

- The most recent comprehensive study\(^1\) of wild animals in travelling circuses is states within one of the conclusions that “Life for wild animals in travelling circuses and mobile zoos does not appear to constitute either a ‘good life’ or a ‘life worth living’.”

Effectiveness of the ban

- A ban on the use of wild animals in circuses is the economic and proportionate option, given the difficulty of enforcing regulations in travelling shows.

- It is unlikely that circuses would have any need or desire to travel to Scotland in the event of a ban, with the knowledge that they would be liable to prosecution. The creation of an offence would therefore be very effective in preventing wild animals being used in travelling circuses in Scotland.

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