



Hartford, CT
100 Exchange Street

ADVANCED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

March 6, 2009

The Honorable Richard Roy – Co-Chair
The Honorable Edward Meyer – Co-Chair
Joint Committee on the Environment
Room 3200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Opposition to H.B. 6555

Dear Chairman Roy and Chairman Meyer:

I am contacting you to express our strong opposition to H.B. 6555, which would criminalize the use and possession of approved elephant husbandry tools such as tethers and guides when used by circuses (but not zoos). We strongly support the proper care and treatment of elephants and all animals, but this legislation is unnecessary and unfairly maligns the circuses and exhibitors who properly and professionally care for their elephants. These restrictions would make it impossible for circuses and most zoos to exhibit elephants in Connecticut. If this bill is passed, our communities will lose vital economic dollars, along with the choice our residents have of seeing elephants.

The *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus* will be performing at the XL Center in Hartford in May. The XL Center is committed to providing quality family entertainment to the local community. In our experience the circus provides a relatively low cost event that allows tens of thousands of guests, predominantly children and their families, to attend events in our arena. The circus also partners with us and local non-profit organizations to invite thousands of children to attend as our guests each year.

We know that the elephants and other animals are an integral part of the circus experience for our patrons. Each year we are pleased to welcome *Ringling Bros.* to our facility and have found the staff to be not only courteous and professional, but to treat all their animals, including the elephants, with care and respect.

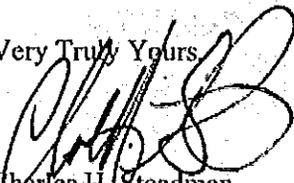
When *Ringling Bros.* visits our arena, they contribute million of dollars to Hartford's economy. Restaurants and other local businesses would also be hurt by the loss of customers now attending all of these shows.

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In light of the above, we are opposed to HB 6555 and ask that you do the same. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Very Truly Yours



Charles H. Steedman

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