

H.R. 2811 Python and Boa Ban

New python and boa ban hearing scheduled for Nov. 5, 2009.

October 26, 2009

On Thursday, Nov. 5, 2009, H.R. 2811 aka "The Python Ban" will go to hearing before the U.S. House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security, chaired by Congressman Bobby Scott (D-VA). As originally written, H.R. 2811 would have banned the import, export and interstate transport of the entire genus python by adding them to the Injurious Wildlife List of the Lacey Act. The current form of the bill has been amended to include only the Burmese python and the Northern African python. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is lobbying to expand the animals included to list all of the snakes in the United States Geologic Survey (USGS) risk assessment of nine large constricting snakes that includes Boa constrictor.

In late July the United States Association of Reptile Keepers (USARK) was successful in removing most pythons from H.R. 2811 when Congressman Rooney (R-FL) offered an amendment that left only the Northern African python and the Burmese python on the bill. In addition, the bill sponsors and committee staff agreed in principle to further limit the scope of H.R. 2811 to only the importation of these snakes. It would still allow the captive bred trade to continue. To date that promise has not been kept.

On Oct. 13, the USGS released a risk assessment of nine large constricting snakes including the reticulated python, Northern African python, Southern African python, Burmese python, green anaconda, yellow anaconda, Deschauensee's anaconda, Beni anaconda and boa constrictor. The African pythons, Burmese python and boa constrictor were all rated as high risk for invasiveness in the U.S.

The new USGS study is not without controversy. The authors of the study were the administrators of the 20-year failed program to eradicate the brown treesnake from Guam that cost taxpayers more than \$100 million. They stonewalled a congressional inquiry and request for a formal briefing on the study filed in August. Nevertheless, HSUS is trying to use the study as impetus to amend H.R. 2811 to include all of the snakes in the study. If this were to happen, and the bill were to pass, approximately 25 percent of the Reptile Nation would be destroyed overnight leaving more than 2 million animals in limbo and reducing their economic value to \$0, bankrupting thousands of hard working American family businesses.

Please do not let this happen. Contact your U.S. Congress representative and oppose H.R. 2811. Please get on the USARK mailing list and stay tuned for instructions on how to fight this bill from the grass roots level.

Andrew Wyatt is the President of the United States Association of Reptile Keepers (USARK) and has been an avid herp enthusiast for more than 35 years. He has traveled the world and has had his animals featured in a number of television productions. For more information about USARK, [click here](#).

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