

AB 1122: Another Bill to Fight

By Russ Case

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To anyone who's been reading my weekly "Random Neural Firings" blog, I have some good news. Or maybe it's bad news. Let's just say I have news: My blog is going daily. I guess someone walked by my office and saw me with my feet up on my desk once too many times, and figured I've got too much time on my hands. So now you'll be getting daily installments, at least for the foreseeable future.

Yet another bill being introduced could cause problems for pet lovers. I received a PIJAC (Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council) PetAlert announcing this bill. And according to a USARK announcement I received at the same time, it started with the Humane Society of the United States, so you know it's not going to be pro-reptile.

California Assembly Bill AB 1122 seeks to criminalize the sale of animals at a variety of outlets. Specifically, it says it would be illegal "to willfully sell, display, or offer for sale, or give away as part of a commercial transaction, a live animal on any street, highway, public right-of-way, commercial parking lot, or at any outdoor special sale, swap meet, flea market, parking lot sale, carnival, or boardwalk."

Out here in California you may sometimes see someone selling oranges on freeway offramps, but I don't remember ever seeing someone selling herps. The giving-away of animals as prizes at carnivals has long been a controversial practice, but the way the bill is written it does not clearly define some pretty important terms, especially "swap meet" and "flea market." Reptile hobbyists know that reptile swap meets, flea markets, and expos are great places to buy reptiles and meet expert reptile keepers and breeders. But as it's worded, AB 1122 could make those illegal.

Once again I urge reptile fans (and all exotic pet fans) to fire off letters of concern and make phone calls, just as so many of you did with HR 669.

Read the PIJAC PetAlert here. It includes contact information for the people that need to hear from you. And act FAST!

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