

North Carolina Reptile Regulation

North Carolina legislators hold hearing on bill regulating reptile ownership.

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The North Carolina Senate Judiciary Committee II was scheduled to hold a public hearing on March 5, for a measure that elaborates on handling and ownership standards for venomous reptiles, and sets forth such standards for constricting snakes and crocodilians. Details of the hearing were not immediately available.

As introduced, SB 307 establishes a registration process for owners of venomous reptiles, constricting snakes and crocodilians.

Large constricting snakes are identified as the following:

Reticulated python, *Python reticulatus*
Burmese python, *P. molurus*
African rock python, *P. sebae*
Amethystine python, *Morelia amethystina*
Green Anaconda, *Eunectes murinus*
Or any of their subspecies or hybrids

Crocodilians are identified as all but the American alligator.

According to the proposed bill, the owners must register the location of the animal's housing with local law enforcement. Registration must be made by December 1, 2010, and updated on an annual basis. Local law enforcement may charge an annual registration fee not to exceed \$50 per housing location.

SB 307 also sets forth housing standards for permanent containers and transport containers, requiring venomous snakes to be identified as such on container labels; and outlines written safety and emergency protocols.

Violations include misdemeanor and felony penalties depending on whether or not a person other than the owner suffers a life-threatening injury or is killed.

In an alert about the committee hearing, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) stated it is not opposed to a "reasonable" permit system for venomous snakes, large constrictors and crocodilians, provided the permit system is limited to those species that represent a legitimate threat. According to PIJAC, North Carolina's proposal parallels steps taken in Florida and Texas that PIJAC worked with concerned reptile keepers to support. PIJAC claims outright bans drive ownership underground, which is not in the best interest of the animal or public health and safety.