



THE WILDCAT SANCTUARY



The Honorable Mike Quigley
U.S. House of Representatives
2078 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
U.S. House of Representatives
271 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
U.S. Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
U.S. Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper
U.S. Senate
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
U.S. Senate
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

May 10, 2022

Dear Representatives and Senators:

I am the founder of The Wildcat Sanctuary in Sandstone, MN. We are accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries and licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture. We do not buy, breed, trade or sell animals and are a no-contact facility. The sanctuary was founded in 1999 and currently home to over 120 wild cat residents, most of whom have been former “pets” or seized by local and federal authorities due to public safety concerns or neglect.

I thank you for introducing the Big Cat Public Safety Act, H.R. 263 and S. 1210. This bipartisan legislation prohibits the possession of lions, tigers, leopards, cheetahs, jaguars, cougars, or any hybrid of these species by private individuals. It is narrowly focused on pet big cats and includes exemptions for sanctuaries, universities, and zoos.

This bill also restricts direct contact between the public and big cats. Tigers and other big cats are bred constantly to supply the cub market for roadside menageries, fairs, festivals, and attractions where they offered for photo opportunities and play session. Cub petting is the number #1 contributor the surplus of big cats which too often find their way into the pet trade posing a public safety risk.

Rescued tigers Callie, Caesar, Logan, Dimitri, Griffen, Zeke, Ekaterina, Daisy, Pandora, Nikita, and Tonka were all bred for human interaction. The Wildcat Sanctuary was called upon to rescue each one of them.

Recently, I was contacted by a private owner who is considering surrendering his 5-year-old ‘pet tiger’. He said he drives the tiger, named Matrix, in the back of his van to local events where he allows photos of the 300 lb. tiger being walked on a leash. This is a dangerous accident waiting to happen.



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We now have the opportunity to end this public safety issue.

Local authorities do not have the proper resources or training to respond to an incident involving a big cat – nor should they have to. Over the years we have been called upon numerous times by authorities to assist in cases involving big cats, including three separate deaths where tigers killed their owners as well as 10 tigers who had gravely injured a family friend just to name a few. We can't count the number of times we have assisted local law enforcement with the removal of wild cats from private residences.

Based on my expertise running a big cat sanctuary, and a desire to see protections for both big cats and the public, I strongly urge Congress to pass H.R. 263 and S. 1210, the Big Cat Public Safety Act.

Sincerely,

Tammy Thies
Founder and Executive Director
Wildcat Sanctuary
cat@wildcatsanctuary.org
320-245-6871