**Fact Sheet: Senate Bill 1062 (Lara)**

**Stop the abuse of captive elephants in California**

**Legislative history**

SB 1062 follows from last year’s Senate Bill 716 which passed the Senate by a vote of 28-8 and the Assembly 69-8, but was vetoed by Gov. Brown. SB 1062 addresses the Governor’s concerns by proposing a new Fish and Game Code section to explicitly prohibit the use of bullhooks, a violation of which will prompt civil penalties including possible revocation of the permit to possess an elephant in California.

**Prohibit use of inhumane training tools**

Bullhooks are commonly used by elephant handlers to train, punish, and control elephants. A bullhook resembles a fireplace poker. It has a sharp metal hook and spiked tip, and the handle is typically plastic or wood. It is used to prod, pull, hook, and strike elephants on the most sensitive areas of their bodies during training, performing, and handling.

Both ends of the bullhook are used to inflict pain. The hook is used to apply varying degrees of pressure to sensitive spots on an elephant’s body, causing the elephant to move away from the source of pain, often causing puncture wounds and lacerations. When the hooked end is held, the handle is used as a club, inflicting substantial pain when the elephant is struck in areas where little tissue separates skin and bone. Even when not in use, the bullhook is a constant reminder of the painful punishment that can be delivered at any time. Simply put, there is no way to humanely use a bullhook. Circuses have misled the public with spurious claims that a bullhook—euphemistically called a “guide”—is akin to using a leash on a dog or reins on a horse. If someone were to use a bullhook or similar device to control and train a dog or a horse, it would be considered cruelty to animals.

**Safer and more humane alternatives exist**

Protected Contact, an animal management style based on positive reinforcement training utilizing food treats and praise, was developed over 25 years ago and is currently used by most zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and legitimate sanctuaries that house elephants. This management system uses physical barriers such as a fence or training wall to keep trainers safe, and also gives elephants a choice in whether or not they want to participate in training exercises. The AZA adopted a policy in 2014 that prohibits keepers from sharing unrestricted space with elephants and avoids the need for implements like the bullhook. **No AZA-accredited zoo in California uses bullhooks on elephants — and the California Association of Zoos & Aquariums supports SB 1062.**

**Existing laws do sufficiently protect elephants**

Federal law regarding the care of elephants does not prohibit the use of bullhooks so, in response to the public’s changing attitude regarding the use and treatment of captive elephants, more than 50 jurisdictions in the U.S. have restricted the use of elephants and/or the use of bullhooks, including the cities of Los Angeles and Oakland. San Francisco has banned all exotic animal performances.

**Circus trends**

As of May 2016, Ringling Bros. Circus will no longer feature elephants in its shows, and Garden Bros. Circus has announced that 2016 will be the last year it will tour with elephants. Other circuses that have toured in California with elephants include UniverSoul Circus, Carson and Barnes, and Circus Gatti. However, none of these circuses have renewed the required Department of Fish and Wildlife permits to exhibit elephants in California.

**The time has come for the state of California to ensure the humane treatment of elephants.**

**Supporting organizations listed on back.**
Support for SB 1062

California Association of Zoos & Aquariums

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