August 20, 2016

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.  
Governor of California  
State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA  95814

RE: Request for signature on Senate Bill 1062 (Lara)

Dear Governor Brown,

On behalf of the Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) and our California supporters, I urge you to sign SB 1062, the bill that would prohibit the use of elephant bullhooks. PAWS is proud to be a co-sponsor of this important elephant protection bill.

PAWS was formed in 1984 to rescue and care for abused, neglected and retired exotic and wild animals, many from the entertainment industry. We operate three captive wildlife sanctuaries in California, including ARK 2000, a 2,300-acre natural habitat refuge where we care for eight elephants, among other animals.

PAWS is recognized internationally for its expertise in the care and management of captive wildlife. I serve on the Director’s Advisory Committee on the Humane Care and Treatment of Wild Animals for the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, and the Advisory Committee for the Detroit Zoological Society’s Center for Zoo Animal Welfare. I formerly worked with trained wild animals in the entertainment industry, doing film, television and live appearances. Since then, I have trained and managed captive elephants, including dangerous elephants, all without using a bullhook.

Please consider the following information as you deliberate the merits of SB 1062:

The bullhook is a menacing weapon resembling a fireplace poker, with a sharpened metal tip and hook at the end. It is used to dominate and control elephants used in circuses, for rides and other “entertainment.” For the bullhook to be effective, an elephant must be taught to fear the device – meaning she learns that compliance with commands avoids a painful jab or strike. Trainers are actually required to forcefully hook, jab or hit elephants who miss a cue, move too slowly, or display unwanted behaviors – whether during performances, training, or routine handling. This mistreatment continues throughout the elephant’s life, with the worst abuses taking place behind closed doors and out of view of law enforcement.

As long as an elephant fears the bullhook, the mere presence of the device is enough to control this 8,000-10,000 pound animal. There is no such thing as “misuse” of the bullhook: Its very use is abusive. The bullhook is not like a leash on a dog or reins on a horse. It is something to be avoided by an elephant because it only represents pain. Without that association, the bullhook is useless.

PAWS uses a modern, positive reinforcement-based method called “protected contact” to train and manage our elephants. Keepers use a “target” – a long-handled pole with a soft tip – to cue behaviors. In contrast to the bullhook, which
an elephant moves away from to avoid pain, our elephants are trained to move toward the target, and the behavior is reinforced with a food reward and praise. Using this method, we consistently provide a full range of husbandry and veterinary care, including foot care, blood collection, trunk washes, physical examination, and specialized, more intensive care for older elephants. This method is best for elephant welfare and keeper safety.

All elephants can make the transition from bullhook-based training to the safer and more humane “protected contact” management system. Elephants are highly intelligent, and no matter their age or previous training they are able to make the transition to protected contact. Nearly every elephant who has come to PAWS was once managed with the bullhook; some of them since birth. All have successfully made the transition.

Use of the bullhook does not mean an elephant receives better care. Our bull elephant Nicholas came from a circus background, where he was trained from birth with a bullhook. He was so aggressive and fearful that veterinarians at his previous facility were unable to perform even the most basic testing, such as blood collection, unless he was heavily sedated or anesthetized. At PAWS, Nicholas soon learned that he would not be reprimanded or harmed, and that his voluntary cooperation with keepers earned him food rewards. Today, Nicholas is so well trained we are able to provide him with all necessary husbandry and veterinary care.

Data demonstrates that bullhook use does not equal better veterinary care or extend elephants’ lives, especially those with foot and/or joint problems. (Foot and joint disease are common, and often lethal, in captive elephants; many elephants have arrived at PAWS with these problems.) PAWS conducted a review of elephant deaths in AZA-accredited zoos since 2000, and found that the age at death for elephants with foot and joint conditions was similar in zoos that did or did not use bullhooks. This suggests that use of the bullhook did not confer better veterinary care than that provided in protected contact. Interestingly, the same review at PAWS, where bullhooks have never been used, indicates that elephants treated for foot and joint disease may have lived longer than elephants with those conditions in zoos, regardless of the zoos’ management method.

Science shows that elephants experience improved welfare under protected contact management. A scientific study published in Zoo Biology (Wilson, et al, 2015) was conducted at Zoo Atlanta as the zoo transitioned from bullhook-based management to protected contact. The authors concluded that the transition to protected contact management is associated with improved elephant welfare. The study found:

- Positive reinforcement in the form of food and praise was delivered to elephants at much higher rates in protected contact. In contrast, keepers using bullhooks did not rely on positive reinforcement to control elephants.

- Keepers had a higher rate of interaction with the elephants in protected contact than in the bullhook-based system. (At PAWS, keepers regularly praise, pat, and rub elephants during training sessions for additional positive reinforcement and personal bonding.)

- Protected contact management provides elephants with more choice and control over their environment, which is important to the welfare of captive wild animals. In bullhook-based training elephants have no choice...
but to strictly obey every command, whereas in protected contact elephants voluntarily engage with keepers. Increased control may be related to decreased abnormal repetitive behaviors, greater exploration, reduced physical evidence of stress, and improved cognitive performance.

Professional elephant care has been steadily moving in the direction of more humane management. The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) has mandated that keepers can no longer share unrestricted space with elephants, a policy that essentially steers zoos away from the bullhook. No California zoo accredited by the AZA uses the bullhook, and the California Association of Zoos and Aquariums supports SB 1062.

Public values about the treatment and use of wild animals in entertainment are rapidly changing: Los Angeles and Oakland have passed bullhook bans, and San Francisco has prohibited all wild animal performances; elephant rides are no longer offered at any county fair in California. More than 50 municipalities across the nation now have some form of restriction involving performing wild animals, including bullhook bans, and the state of Rhode Island recently prohibited the use of bullhooks. Clearly, the two exhibitors still using bullhooks in California must adapt to this new, more humane environment. SB 1062 gives them ample time to retrain their elephants in protected contact, and PAWS stands ready to assist.

The entertainment industry is evolving. This is perhaps most evident in the Ringling Bros. Circus decision to end its elephant acts earlier this year. Less evident are the changes in Hollywood, including increased use of computer-generated images in place of performing animals and greater sensitivity to the treatment of elephants and other wild animals. More than 70 entertainment industry professionals signed on to a statement in support of SB 1062, representing acclaimed and award-winning actors, directors and producers, as well as writers, script coordinators, singer-songwriters, stunt performers and casting directors.

At PAWS, we work with, and learn from, our elephants every single day. One thing is certain: These keenly intelligent, self-aware and sensitive animals deserve our greatest respect and protection – including being free of the physical punishment and fear of pain that are inseparable from bullhook use. SB 1062 provides that respect and protection and upholds our values as Californians.

I urge you to sign SB 1062 into law.

Sincerely,

Ed Stewart
President and Co-founder, PAWS

Attachment: Statement by Entertainment Industry Professionals in Support of SB 1062, June 14, 2016

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A review of elephant deaths in AZA accredited zoos since 2000 shows that of the 25 elephant deaths known to have involved arthritis and/or joint disease, nearly three-quarters (18) of those zoos used bullhooks. Six zoos did not use bullhooks, and management protocol at one zoo was unknown. In zoos that used bullhooks, the majority of the elephants who died were 40-49 years of age (11), followed by three who were 50-59 years old, and two each in the 30-39 and 25-29 age ranges. In zoos that used protected contact, the majority of elephants who died (4) were in the 40-49 age range, and two were in the 50-59 range. This suggests that the age at death for elephants with foot and joint problems were similar in zoos that did or did not use bullhooks. In comparison, of the eight elephants who were humanely euthanized at PAWS since 2000 due to foot and/or joint disease, the majority (5) died in the 50-59 age range, followed by one each in the 40-49, 30-39 and 25-29 age ranges. (This includes one elephant who arrived at PAWS for hospice care and died at age 39.) These numbers suggest that elephants at PAWS with foot and joint problems may have lived longer than those in zoos, regardless of the zoos' management method.
Statement by Entertainment Industry Professionals in Support of SB 1062 (elephant protection)
June 14, 2016

We, the undersigned entertainment industry professionals urge California to enact Senate Bill 1062, a bill by Senator Ricardo Lara to prohibit use of the bullhook on elephants. We agree that the bullhook is an outdated and inhumane device that unnecessarily subjects elephants to fear and pain and that it has no place in the great state of California. There is no excuse for treating elephants cruelly for entertainment’s sake.

We strongly agree with the following facts that support passage of this bill:

**Elephants need to be protected from the bullhook.** The bullhook is an archaic weapon designed to inflict pain on these highly intelligent and sensitive animals. Beginning when elephants are very young, handlers jab, hook and strike them with the bullhook to teach them to fear the device. From then on, the bullhook is a powerful reminder of the painful punishment that follows if an elephant so much as misses a cue, doesn’t move fast enough, or steps out of line.

**Modern elephant training methods exist that are safer and more humane for elephants and humans alike.** Today, zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and bona fide sanctuaries in California use positive reinforcement and food rewards to train elephants, while providing excellent care. None of them use the bullhook.

**The bullhook is used behind the scenes to train and punish elephants.** The worst abuses take place away from the view of the public and law enforcement. The only sure way to protect elephants is to prohibit use of the bullhook.

**The times are changing when it comes to the use and treatment of elephants in entertainment.** The cities of Los Angeles - the entertainment capital of the world - and Oakland have prohibited the bullhook, and San Francisco has banned all performing wild animal acts. More than 40 municipalities across the U.S. have similar restrictions. The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus no longer uses elephant acts. We don’t need to abuse elephants with bullhooks to entertain the world.

California must ensure the humane treatment of elephants by enacting SB 1062 and prohibiting use of the bullhook.

Signed,

**Lee Aronsohn** Co-creator, *Two and A Half Men, Big Bang Theory, Mike and Molly, Mom*

**Bob Barker**, Emmy Award and Lifetime Achievement Award Winner, Television Host, Producer, Actor

**Kim Basinger**, Actress, Academy Award Winner

**Kristin Bauer van Straten**, Actress, *HBO's True Blood, Once Upon A Time*

**Marissa Berlin**, Writer and Script Coordinator, *Baby Daddy, Kirby Buckets*

**Jason Biggs**, Actor, *Orange Is the New Black, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles TV series*

**Leslie Bohem**, Writer and Producer, *Extant, Dante’s Peak, Daylight*

**Henri Bollinger**, President, Henri Bollinger Associates

**Brannon Braga**, Writer and Producer, *Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey, 24, Threshold, Mission Impossible 2, Star Trek Next Generation Enterprise and Voyager*

**Lesley-Ann Brandt**, Actress, *Spartacus, The Librarians, Single Ladies*
Scott Budnick, Executive Producer, *The Hangover Parts I, II, and III*


George Davis, Attorney, Nelson Davis, LLP


Richard Donner, Director and Producer, *Lethal Weapon, Lethal Weapon 3, Goonies, Free Willy*

Laney Fichera, Television Host and Correspondent, Producer; *Extra, E!, Hard Copy, Infinity, TV Guide Network*

Jorja Fox, Actress, *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, ER, West Wing*

Sarah Goldfinger, Producer, *Grimm, Hawaii Five-0, Parenthood, CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, Brothers & Sisters*

Mitchell Gossett, Head Talent Agent, CESD

Anastasia Griffith, Actress, *Once Upon A Time, Copper, Royal Pains, Trauma, Damages*

Javier Grillo-Marxuach, Producer, *The 100, Helix, Lost, Medium*

Woody Harrelson, Actor

Tyler Hilton, Actor and Singer-songwriter, *Extant, One Tree Hill, Walk the Line*

Anjelica Huston, Actress and Director, Academy Award Winner

Frank John Hughes, Actor, *24, The Sopranos*

Rick Jaffa and Amanda Silver, Writers and Producers, *Rise of the Planet of the Apes, Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*

Erik Jendresen, Writer and Producer, *Big Bang, Killing Lincoln, Band of Brothers*

Jesse V. Johnson, Stunt Performer and Coordinator, Director

Gloria Calderon Kellett, Producer and Writer, *iZombie, Mixology, Rules of Engagement, How I Met Your Mother, Devious Maids*

Kat Kramer, Actress and Producer

Mrs. Stanley Kramer, Director of the Stanley Kramer Film Museum

Delfin Labao, Costumer, *Timeline, Lethal Weapon 4, Conspiracy Theory*

Cece Neber Labao, Actress, *Lethal Weapon 4, Conspiracy Theory*

Bonnie-Jill Laflin, NBA Scout, Los Angeles Lakers


Jessica Lu, Actress, *Awkward, Storytellers*

James Madio, Actor, *Band of Brothers, The Basketball Diaries, Hook*

Shirley Manson, Actress, Composer and Singer (*Garbage*); *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*

Kate Mara, Actress, *House of Cards*

Merrill Markoe, Five-time Emmy Award-winning Television Writer, Author

Ross McCall, Actor, *Band of Brothers, White Collar, 24: Live Another Day*

Charles McDougall, Director, *Resurrection, Secrets and Lies, The Office, Parks and Recreation, Desperate Housewives*
Erin McPherson, Chief Content Officer, Maker Studios
Rose McGowan, Actress, Chosen, Charmed, Once Upon A Time, Nip/Tuck
Lea Michele, Singer-songwriter and Actress; Glee
Jenny Mollen, Actress, Girls, Crash
Sarah Jane Morris, Actress, NCIS, Brothers & Sisters, Seven Pounds
Kevin Nealon, Actor, Writer and Comedian, Weeds, Saturday Night Live
Sheila Nevins, President, HBO Documentary Films
Danielle Nicolet, Actress, The Game, Third Rock From the Sun, X-Men TV Series
Edward Norton, Actor, Birdman, Primal Fear, American History X
Hawk Ostby and Mark Fergus, Writers, Iron Man, Children of Men, Cowboys & Aliens
Tom Pabst, Writer, Paranormal Activity 2, Extant
Erik Palladino, Actor, NCIS: Los Angeles, ER
Gavin Polone, Producer, Director and Agent, Curb Your Enthusiasm, Gilmore Girls, Zombieland, Panic Room
Nikki Reed, Actress, Twilight
Ilyse Reutlinger, Post Production Supervisor, Lethal Weapon 4, Conspiracy Theory
Oren Segal, Agent, Radius Entertainment
Jessy Schram, Actress, The Lizzie Borden Chronicles, Once Upon A Time, Falling Skies, Mad Men
Jack Shepherd, Editorial Director, Buzzfeed
Sia, Singer-songwriter
Gianna Sobol, Writer, The Returned, Extant, Counterpart
Ian Somerhalder, Actor, The Vampire Diaries
Hilary Swank, Actress, Academy Award Winner
Brian Tee, Actor, Jurassic World, The Wolverine, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2
Betty Thomas, Director, Producer and Actress, Hill Street Blues, Audrey,
Lily Tomlin, Actress, Comedienne, Producer
Mary Vernieu, Casting Director
Greg Walker, Producer and Writer, Without a Trace, Smallville, Vegas
Mike White, Actor, Director, Writer and Producer, School of Rock, Enlightened
Ron Yerxa, Producer, The Leftovers, Nebraska, The Switch, Little Miss Sunshine, Cold Mountain, Election
Ronnie Yeskel, Casting Director, Pulp Fiction, Reservoir Dogs