



ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

October 27, 2014

City Council Members  
Eureka Springs City Hall  
44 S. Main Street  
Eureka Springs, AR 72632

Dear Alderpersons,

Feld Entertainment, Inc. (“Feld”) is the world’s leading producer of live family entertainment spectacles *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey® Circus*, *Marvel Universe Live*, *Disney On Ice*, *Disney Live!* and *Feld Motor Sports®* (FMS) events, including *Monster Jam®* and *Monster Energy® Supercross*. Every year various FEI productions visit Arkansas delighting thousands of area residents.

We understand that the Council is planning to consider an ordinance to prohibit the use of animals in traveling circuses. A ban on the use of animals in traveling circuses is unnecessary and unreasonably restrictive. We oppose efforts to prohibit the use of animals in circuses and prevent lawful, state and federally regulated exhibitors like *Ringling Bros.* from being able to conduct business in the city.

There are currently numerous laws and regulations in place to provide protection to all performing animals and allow for the prosecution of those who neglect or mistreat the animals in their care. The care and treatment of animals in circuses is heavily regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) under the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA). AWA regulations are comprehensive and address such topics as the animals’ traveling facilities, food, watering, ambient temperatures, public and animal safety standards and other regulatory oversight. All USDA licensed exhibitors, including zoos and circuses are open to regular, unannounced inspections by the agency, and USDA frequently inspects licensed exhibitors to ensure they comply with AWA regulations and standards. These are the same rules and requirements that are applied to zoos. In addition, state and local laws regarding animal welfare and the prevention of cruelty are applicable to all traveling exhibitors within their jurisdictions, and many of those agencies also conduct inspections of circuses.

*Ringling Bros.* has over 144 years of experience working with and caring for exotic animals. We pride ourselves on the excellent care that all of our animals receive and the fact that

they are healthy, thriving, vigorous and safe. They consume fresh, nutritious food that is purchased locally and delivered to each performance site. We have a team of full-time veterinarians, veterinary technicians and animal caregivers who oversee all aspects of the animals' care and well-being.

There is no basis to support the idea that the act of traveling is adverse to the welfare of animals in circuses, as evidenced by a multitude of scientific studies. To the contrary, USDA-funded research on traveling circus animals showed that the welfare of animals in circuses is enhanced because of the added stimuli and sources of variation in routine.

The proposal before the Council is unreasonably discriminatory against circuses, even though they are subject to the same regulatory requirements for animal care as zoos and other exhibitors. It is vital to recognize that there are multiple layers of laws and regulations already in place that govern the safe and humane display and management of exotic animals. We believe that such local legislation that unnecessarily and unreasonably interferes with the ability of lawful, federally regulated exhibitors to manage exotic animals would conflict with the federal Animal Welfare Act.

Make no mistake – the current debate is not about animal welfare; it is about the ability of audiences to see and appreciate animals up close and in person. Animal activist groups want to deny the public that right. Circuses are an art form steeped in tradition, rich in history and recognized as culturally significant, and the circus itself is a lawful activity. To prohibit licensed exhibitors from conducting their performance with any animal just because some portion of society prefers a different form of entertainment is nothing less than illegal censorship. The decision as to whether to attend a circus should rest with the public, not be made for them by a government prohibition that does nothing for the animals.

In 2014, circuses will entertain millions of families in the U.S. Those are literally millions of people who want to see our animals up close in a performance setting, which is a unique and treasured experience. There is no substitute for the live experience – it cannot be equaled or recreated by looking at a photo or video of an animal. It is well-established that the opportunity to see these exotic animals first-hand is a crucial aspect of conservation education and significantly contributes to the public's awareness of and interest in preserving these magnificent animals. We respectfully urge you to oppose any measure that would take away the opportunity to experience these animals by preventing circuses from visiting Eureka Springs.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide you with information regarding animals in the circus and the existing state and federal laws governing all exhibitors of exotic animals. I would be happy to address any questions you may have. I can be contacted at (703) 749-5547.

Sincerely,



Thomas L. Albert  
Vice President – Government Relations