



Contact:
Cathy Calliotte
Vice President, Marketing and Communications
202-452-1525 x107
cathy@pijac.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 26, 2012

PIJAC Applauds Ohio Senate's Efforts on "Dangerous Wild Animal" Bill

In a move widely expected to toughen the laws in Ohio regulating ownership of "dangerous wild animals", Senate Bill 310 was voted favorably out of committee yesterday by the Senate Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Committee with a unanimous vote of 9-0. It was then promptly passed by the full Senate with a 30-1 vote. At issue for the pet industry was the inclusion of reptiles in the proposed legislation. "Well before the unfortunate incident occurred in Zanesville, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council became involved in working with leaders in Ohio to ensure that pet owners could continue to keep pet snakes", says Mike Canning, President and CEO of PIJAC.

"The version of the bill passed today goes a long way towards preserving the ability of Ohioans to own pet snakes. For larger constricting snakes, there is some regulation by the State that corresponds to the minor risk to the keeper of the snakes." Mike Canning responded to the passage. "Senator Balderson conducted a tremendous amount of research on characteristics of reptiles, and his leadership in balancing the needs of the State and the needs of pet owners is laudable."

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) has had numerous meetings with Governor Kasich's staff and legislators in Columbus from the introductory stages of this legislation to protect reptile ownership. On November 21 and 22, 2011, PIJAC's Bambi Nicole Osborne and Mike Canning went to Columbus with PIJAC member John Mack, owner of Reptiles by Mack in Xenia, Ohio. The group met with members of the Agriculture Committees in both the House and Senate, as well as the Governor's Office, making the case that an overbroad regulation or ban would inhibit the ability of citizens to have pets. To aid efforts and ensure pets stay out of this bill, PIJAC brought on Ohio lobbyist Bill Byers, of Byers and Associates in Columbus. "Bill has been an invaluable resource for the pet industry throughout the months leading up to the introduction of this bill", say PIJAC's Bambi Nicole Osborne. "He has been a tremendously effective presence for us in Columbus."

In its current form, the bill allows for reptile owners to keep their pets, as well as reptile businesses to keep operating. In response to this version of the bill, John Mack stated, "I am happy with the direction this compromised legislation is going. I am even hoping for more changes to come in the House. It means I can stay in Ohio and keep my business here. I plan to hire a few more staff members, and will therefore be contributing to job production in Ohio."

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) provides its members a voice in state and national legislative issues through advocacy and timely information regarding upcoming policy issues that affect the pet industry, pet owners, and the animals they care for. Join PIJAC today at www.pijac.org.

###

PET INDUSTRY JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL

1140 19th Street, N.W., Suite 300 / Washington, D.C. 20036 / 202-452-1525 / www.pijac.org / info@pijac.org