

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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December 8, 2009

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman
Committee on Environment & Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment & Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Boxer and Ranking Member Inhofe:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, opposes S. 373, which would amend the Lacey Act to ban constrictor snakes "of the species Python genera" as an injurious animal.

The bill, ostensibly intended to address the proliferation of the Burmese Python in the Everglades of Florida, is so broadly worded that it would effectively ban all python snakes rather than one specific species. Even worse, the proposed ban circumvents the statutory listing process called for by the Lacey Act, whereby the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) conducts a science-based risk analysis and seeks public comment prior to making a final determination that a species is "injurious." Such a process is already underway at FWS with regard to the Burmese Python. If enacted, S. 373 would bypass this transparent, stakeholder-inclusive, science-based listing process in favor of an overly broad ban.

The Ball Python, for example, would be banned under this proposed bill. The Ball Python – the most popular and widely owned Python species – has limited growth potential and does not pose the same threat as a Burmese Python, yet its import, export, or interstate movement would be prohibited. Thus, if enacted in its current form, this legislation would adversely impact tens of thousands of businesses, hobbyists, and pet owners across the country.

The Chamber recognizes that the introduction and establishment of nonnative wildlife species can cause potential harm; nevertheless, a broadly worded bill that bans far more species than it should to accomplish its objectives and circumvents a statutory, science-based listing process is not the solution. Congress should allow the listing process established by the Lacey Act and carried out by FWS to address the potential threat of the Burmese Python as an injurious species. If, however, Congress intends to pass a ban to limit the import of the Burmese Python, then it is essential that the proposed ban be drafted as narrowly as possible so that it does not cover every species of Python.

Sincerely,



R. Bruce Josten

Cc: The Members of the Committee on the Environment and Public Works