

William E. Brant
The Gourmet Rodent, Inc.



February 26, 2010

To whom it may concern,

My name is William Brant, and my wife Marcia and I have owned The Gourmet Rodent since 1986. Over the past 24 years, the growth of our business has mirrored the growth of the Reptile Industry. When we started, my wife and I worked out of our garage and did everything in our business from marketing to selling, packing, shipping, cage cleaning, etc. The typical start of a small business. Today we employ 65 people and operate in a 56,000 square foot facility located in Newberry, FL, and our payroll last year was in excess of \$1,500,000.

Our business consists of two major endeavors. Sale of frozen rats and mice for animal food, and production and sale of select reptiles for pets. All of our products are sold to major retailers or to distributors. I am writing this to illustrate the negative impact that the listing of the Boa constrictor and Reticulated Python as Injurious Wildlife Species under the Lacey Act would have on our business. In this letter, I am only addressing the economic impact, but please bear in mind that there is a credible body of science that refutes the need to list any of the nine species of Pythons and Boas currently under review.

In 2009 we sold 2,600 Boa constrictors to pet retailers for approximately \$160,000. Bear in mind that we are just one level in the distribution chain, so these animals will be sold at least two other times between producer and consumer. Also, it is important to note that these 2600 animals will eat between \$200 and \$300 per year in food (depending on how much their owner feeds them, and where they purchase their food). The rodents that they consume also go through at least three levels of the distribution chain from producer to consumer. At each of the levels of production, distribution and retailing there are monies paid to staff, and goods consumed. I think it is also important to note that each Boa we sell has residual food sales for many years after the initial sale. Our rodents may feed a Boa for the next 10 to 15 years of its life.

We are just one of many thousands of producers and distributors of Boa constrictors and Reticulated Pythons in the United States. The unnecessary listing of these animals under the Lacey Act could bring this commerce to an abrupt halt. It will not cause my business to fail, however it will cost jobs and eliminate valuable commerce. Other businesses may not be as fortunate as ours, and this regulatory action may be the death blow to an otherwise viable business.

As you review the economic impact the listing of these species will have, I urge you to think of small businesses such as the one my wife and I have created, and not jump to the conclusion that this will have little economic impact. Over a relatively short period of time, this action will cost the American economy billions of dollars.

If you have questions about our business, or the reptile industry in general, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely

William E. Brant