

**Testimony of Christine Roscher of the United States
Association of Reptile Keepers before the Los Angeles County Board
of Supervisors RE Proposed Changes to Animal Ordinance March 9,
2010**

Chairman, members of the Board of Supervisors, I want to thank you for the opportunity to be before you and present testimony today regarding proposals to change animal ordinances in LA County.

My name is Christine Roscher. I own LA Reptiles and I am here representing LA County members of United States Association of Reptile Keepers (USARK).

By way of background, USARK represents the highly sophisticated commercial production of captive bred herpetofauna (reptiles and amphibians) aka herps here in the United States. We are a science and education based advocacy for the responsible private ownership of, and trade in herps. USARK endorses animal welfare, secure containment, sound husbandry, environmental protocols, and an integrated approach to vital conservation issues. Our goal is to facilitate cooperation between government agencies, the scientific community, and the private sector in order to produce policy proposals that will effectively address important husbandry and conservation issues. The health of these animals, public health safety, and maintaining ecological integrity are our primary concerns.

From early beginnings in the pet trade herpetoculture, the practice of breeding reptiles and amphibians, has grown into a sophisticated and independent \$3 billion annual industry. Herpetoculturists produce high quality captive bred animals for collectors, research, zoos, museums, TV & film and pets. Millions of dollars flow into the national economy from the Reptile Industry. It is interlaced and interconnected with all levels of economies. Purchases of equipment, dry goods, bedding and cages channel money into U.S. manufacturing. Millions of dollars go to support American agriculture with purchases of food, including rodents, grain, bedding, vegetables and prepared diets. Millions of dollars more support airlines and parcel shippers. Thousands of American small businesses and their employees depend on the Reptile Industry for their livelihood.

USARK recognizes the concerns of LA County regarding proposed ordinance changes. The problem is that while the intentions are good, this proposal has not been well thought out. This ordinance was designed for dogs and cats. What is appropriate for dogs and cats does not translate into what is appropriate for crickets, mice, fish, reptiles or amphibians. It is apparent that the level of expertise to make recommendations on best management practices beyond dogs and cats is not currently available to LA County. USARK respectfully suggests that the ordinance be limited to dogs and cats only. In addition we would offer our services to LA County to develop best management practices in regards to reptiles, amphibians, fish and their feeder species. We have worked with numerous state and county governments around the country and are the standard bearer for best management practices in this regard. Adding another layer of

regulation without a fundamental understanding of the requirements of these animals will simply have the unintended consequence of hurting legitimate business interests producing and/or selling high quality California reptiles and amphibians.

Again, please limit regulation to dogs and cats. USARK requests the opportunity to bring our expertise to the aid of LA County. Best management practices are appropriate, but what has been proposed is fundamentally flawed in regards to reptiles and amphibians. In addition, there are economic impact considerations and legal questions that should be fully explored prior to any decisions made outside the realm of cats and dogs. The business interests of our members in this county, as well as real animal welfare issues are vital components of a fair and equitable solution that will truly address the fundamental concerns of LA County. We humbly request the proposed ordinance changes be limited to dogs and cats.

Thank you for your consideration.

Christine Roscher