

To Whom It May Concern:

**SAVE THE FROGS! supports SB-1175 (prohibitions on importation and possession of wild animals)**

On behalf of the SAVE THE FROGS! worldwide community and our numerous members, students and supporters in California, I write to urge you to immediately prohibit the importation and sale of live animals for human consumption.

Since 2006, I have published over 20 peer-reviewed articles in international scientific journals on the topic of wildlife diseases. I have spent much of the last decade educating governments and the public about the inevitable consequences of allowing the amphibian food trade to continue: namely, mass die-offs of native wildlife and the introduction of untold numbers of emerging infectious diseases that could be transferred to humans.

Over two million live American Bullfrogs (*Rana catesbeiana*, *Lithobates catesbeianus*) are imported into California each year, most of them in extremely unsanitary conditions that are perfect for the spread of diseases. Often there are 50 frogs in a single bucket, all crawling on top of each other. The farms these frogs were raised in overseas often contain tens of thousands of individuals living in similarly crowded conditions, crawling on top of each other in extremely high density confinement ponds.

A well known study in Biological Conservation estimated that 62% of the American Bullfrogs entering California are infected with the chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*), the most damaging pathogen ever recorded in terms of biodiversity loss.



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There are likely over one million chytrid-infected frogs entering the state of California each year, mostly destined for the wet markets in Los Angeles and San Francisco, where they will come into contact with store owners, employees and unprotected members of the public. There are no regulations requiring quarantine or disease testing of these amphibians, and there is no enforcement by any federal or state agency to ensure the frogs are healthy. The water these frogs are held in gets dumped down drains and releases billions of fungal zoospores into the environment.

Aside from chytrid fungi, frogs also harbor salmonella and ranaviruses, as well as an untold number of other pathogens, most of which have yet to be identified by scientists as there are so few pathologists dedicated to the study of amphibian diseases. Unidentified pathogens usually go unnoticed until it is too late: mass sickness, rapid die-offs of native wildlife, economic damage and ecosystem collapse.

Most human diseases are zoonotic in nature (that is, they are transferred to humans by wildlife), so stopping the introduction of wildlife diseases is the key to protecting humans from future pandemics.

As such, please protect California's citizens, wildlife, and economy by immediately prohibiting the sale of live animals for human consumption.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kerry Kriger

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