

March 30, 2001

The Honorable Maurice Johannessen
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5061
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Johannessen:

The California Fish and Game Commission has reviewed Senate Bill 1093, relating to ownership of ferrets, and must advise you that the Commission is opposed to your bill.

As you know, the question of legalizing ferrets in California has been the subject of considerable debate over the past decade. Last April the Commission considered a request by ferret proponents that the non-native mammal be removed from the prohibited species list. Indicating its willingness to consider the issue, the Commission directed Mr. Floyd Carley, and any other interested ferret proponents, to submit an environmental review of the potential impacts of ferret legalization. The Commission cannot consider this regulatory action without an environmental review to satisfy the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

SB 1093 would ignore the action taken by the Commission last April. It would legalize ownership of ferrets presently in the State, subject to certain restrictions, and then require the Department of Fish and Game to use its own resources to undertake a review of the potential impacts of ferrets compared to other domesticated animals. The study would be submitted to the Commission to then decide whether to remove ferrets from the prohibited species list.

It is hard to imagine a more inappropriate fund source for the environmental review necessary to provide the basis for ferret legalization than the Fish and Game Preservation Fund. The Department, after struggling to regain its financial footing through the 1990's, is finally making progress toward addressing many of the under-funded activities it is charged with performing. Moreover, this mandate is

inconsistent with the Department's mission.

Because the Commission acted decisively last year, I urge you and your colleagues to let our process run its course. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Robert Treanor, Executive Director of the Commission, at the above number.

Sincerely,

Mike Chrisman
President

cc: See Page Two

cc: Senator Dede Alpert
Senator Liz Figueroa
Senator Sheila Kuehl, Chair
Senator Rico Oller
Senator Debra Bowen
Senator Dick Monteith
Senator Debra Ortiz
Senator Byron Sher
Senator Tom Torlakson
Resources Agency
Governor's Office
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