

Ringling Bros. and Barnum Bailey Disappointed By LA City Council Vote to Ban the Circus

Written by Australian Business

VIENNA, Va., Oct. 23, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey®* is disappointed by the decision of the Los Angeles City Council today that effectively bans circuses from performing with elephants in the City. The City Council has taken the extreme step of outlawing the use of guides, also referred to as "bullhooks," which is a critical tool that the circus needs to present elephants. Today's decision was unsupported by any evidence or proof of elephant abuse in

Los Angeles

, and more importantly, it did not implement any measures that would improve the welfare of animals. Instead, it will deprive families of the right to take their children to see live animals at the circus.

Even though *Ringling Bros.* brought joy and happiness to over 90,000 Los Angeles families last year alone, the Council decided to ignore those constituents, ignore the findings of its own independent veterinarian, and instead pass an animal rights-inspired ban that is unsupported by fact or science.

Ringling Bros.

last annual appearance at the Staples Center generated nearly \$1 million

for the local economy and impacted 1200 local jobs. Prior to today's ban,

Ringling Bros.

was scheduled to play the Staples Center through 2016.

Despite the Council's decision, *Ringling Bros.* remains proud of its unblemished operating history in the City of Los Angeles, where it has played since 1922.

Ringling Bros.

has been licensed annually for decades to operate with elephants in Los Angeles

without violation of any elephant abuse or cruelty laws.

Today's decision also ignored the fact that *Ringling Bros.* is highly regulated and is open to inspection by local, state, and federal officials in every city we visit. This past year alone, Los Angeles Animal Services (LAAS) conducted 25 hours of inspections over a nine day period at the Staples Center. During those inspections, the City's own independent veterinarian was unable to find any evidence of elephant abuse and reported,

"I had checked the hooks used today and watched the handlers use them. The hooks were

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wrapped with only the tip exposed and light weight. No one used them harshly. As a matter of fact, they carry it more than use it and control mostly by voice and touch. The hook is used only if needed or for safety."

This unnecessary ban disregards laws already on the books that already prohibit any intentional physical abuse or ill-treatment of any animal and California has a criminal statute that specifically prohibits mistreatment of elephants. We hope that the City Council will reconsider its rash decision and allow

The

Greatest Show On Earth®

to return to

Los Angeles

with its treasured elephants for many years to come.

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