

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 7, 2005

The Honorable Gale Norton
Secretary
Department of Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

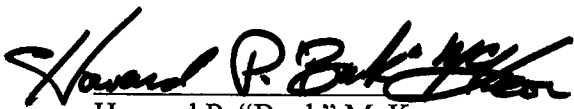
Dear Secretary Norton,

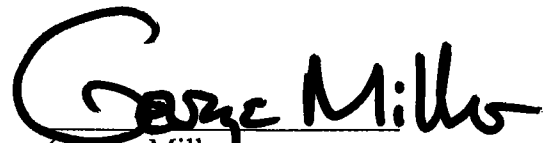
As the authors and prime sponsors of legislation to curb the private ownership of big cats as pets, we are disappointed that the necessary regulations for enforcement of this law have still not been promulgated. The Captive Wildlife Safety Act (P.L. 108-269) was passed to curtail the proliferation of exotic pet ownership in the United States. As you may know, support in Congress for our legislation was so strong that it became law without a single dissenting vote.

We have watched numerous news reports of potentially disastrous big cat escapes in our state of California and around the country since passage of HR 1006. Last month, a tiger was shot to death in the apparent absence of a more humane alternative. We do not yet know who had possession of this animal beforehand or how the tiger managed escape. We do know that this problem continues to persist and needs to be addressed through regulation. We introduced the Captive Wildlife Safety Act to prevent any further incidents, like the one mentioned above, that may cause the unnecessary mistreatment of these animals or, more importantly, bring injury or death to any innocent person, who has the misfortune to cross paths with these dangerous animals.

It is absolutely vital that the Captive Wildlife Safety Act be fully and aggressively enforced by the Department of the Interior. This enforcement will ultimately save lives, but cannot be implemented sufficiently without creation of the regulations. I look forward to your response on this critical issue. Thank you for your time and attention to this important concern.

Sincerely,


Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Member of Congress


George Miller
Member of Congress