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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2807**

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**State of Washington**

**55th Legislature**

**1998 Regular Session**

**By** House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Pennington, Alexander and Mielke)

Read first time 02/05/98. Referred to Committee on .

1 AN ACT Relating to protecting citizens from dangerous wildlife; and  
2 adding new sections to chapter 16.52 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 16.52 RCW  
5 to read as follows:

6 The department of health, working in close consultation with the  
7 departments of fish and wildlife and agriculture, shall establish a set  
8 of guidelines for the proper keeping of lions, tigers, and other cat  
9 species, not included in the statutory definition of wildlife in RCW  
10 77.08.010, as pets. Proper keeping of the species *Felis catus*, the  
11 domestic cat, shall not be included in the guidelines. The guidelines  
12 shall be directed toward assuring the health, welfare, and safety of  
13 the animals and of the surrounding community. The guidelines shall be  
14 no more restrictive on pet owners than is reasonably necessary to  
15 accomplish this purpose. The guidelines shall include appropriate  
16 standards for indoor and outdoor facilities and for cage size and  
17 construction for the various species. The guidelines shall also  
18 include appropriate standards for security of the animals and transport  
19 of the animals to provide for the safety of the public.

1 In developing these guidelines, the department shall, at a minimum,  
2 solicit input from zoos, animal rehabilitation facilities, animal  
3 control associations, private organizations with expertise regarding  
4 these cat species, and veterinarians with expertise in caring for these  
5 cat species. Current pet owners of these cat species may also submit  
6 information to the department. The department may maintain a list of  
7 contact people in the state who offer information that may be useful to  
8 a person who keeps or is contemplating keeping a member of one of these  
9 cat species as a pet.

10 The department shall complete the guidelines no later than December  
11 1, 1998, and shall publish notice in the Washington State Register that  
12 the guidelines have been established and are available from the  
13 department.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 16.52 RCW  
15 to read as follows:

16 (1) A city, town, or county legislative authority may prohibit by  
17 ordinance the keeping of lions, tigers, and other nonindigenous cat  
18 species other than domestic cats as pets within the boundaries of the  
19 local government.

20 (2) Once the department of health has published notice of the  
21 guidelines as directed in section 1 of this act, a city, town, or  
22 county legislative authority choosing to allow persons to keep lions,  
23 tigers, and other nonindigenous cat species other than domestic cats as  
24 pets must adopt an ordinance authorizing these animals to be kept as  
25 pets, and the ordinance must be at least as strict as the department of  
26 health guidelines. The provisions of this section do not preclude a  
27 city, town, or county legislative authority from adopting stricter  
28 requirements than the guidelines established by the department of  
29 health.

30 (3) If a city, town, or county legislative authority adopted an  
31 ordinance that regulates the keeping of one or more of these cat  
32 species as pets prior to the publication of the notice of guidelines,  
33 then a person who is keeping one of these cat species as a pet in  
34 accordance with the preexisting ordinance may continue to be regulated  
35 by the terms of that ordinance rather than the new ordinance that meets  
36 the requirements of the department of health guidelines. A preexisting  
37 ordinance may only regulate those particular animals that are being

1 kept prior to the publication of the notice of guidelines and that  
2 continue to be kept in the same location.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 16.52 RCW  
4 to read as follows:

5 A person who keeps a tiger, lion, or other nonindigenous cat  
6 species other than domestic cats as a pet is liable for any damages  
7 incurred by a person, local government, or state agency resulting from  
8 the escape from custody of the animal. Damages include any court costs  
9 and reasonable attorneys' fees. The person is also liable for costs  
10 incurred by local enforcement agents dealing with abandonment and  
11 relocation of these animals.

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