



JOHN R. KASICH

GOVERNOR • STATE OF OHIO

Communication Department

EXECUTIVE ORDER ON DANGEROUS WILD ANIMALS

Existing, Underused Legal Powers Tapped While Longer-Term Legal Solution Finalized *Fact Sheet*

In response to the recent tragedy in Muskingum County involving dangerous wild animals, Gov. John R. Kasich issued an Executive Order instructing state agencies to use existing but underused legal powers in innovative ways to address threats to animal welfare and public health and safety, as well as better support the enforcement efforts of local officials.

EXISTING BUT UNDERUSED LEGAL AUTHORITY WILL BE APPLIED IN INNOVATIVE WAYS: The governor instructed Administration officials to scour Ohio law for existing powers to regulate animal welfare and protect the public's health and safety and several powerful legal tools were identified, but appear to be underused. Ohio will work with local law enforcement and public officials, as well as humane societies, to better apply existing animal welfare and public health laws in innovative, aggressive ways until more specific laws regulating wild animals are enacted.

- **Humane Societies:** Since 1953, Ohio law has given humane societies broad authority—including arrest authority—to enforce Ohio's animal welfare laws, in coordination with local officials. Ohio will work with the state and county humane societies and local officials to better use these existing powers for the benefit of animal welfare.
- **Public Health and Safety:** The Ohio Department of Health and local health officials currently have broad powers to protect the public health and safety. Given the risk that dangerous wild animals potentially pose to the public, the Department of Health will work with local health officials to identify where potential risks exist and better enforce current laws to defend against them.

ALL EXISTING NATIVE WILD ANIMAL PERMITS WILL BE REVIEWED: The Ohio Department of Natural Resources regulates ownership of dangerous wild animals native to Ohio. ODNR will review existing permits to ensure proper compliance and perform onsite inspections to the fullest extent possible with existing resources, and additional resource needs will be identified for future enforcement efforts.

WILD ANIMAL AUCTIONS WILL BE RESTRICTED AND ANY UNLICENSED AUCTIONS WILL BE SHUT DOWN: The Ohio Department of Agriculture will use its existing authority to regulate auctions to pursue agreements with auction houses that trade in dangerous wild animals to impose a temporary moratorium on their sale. Additionally, the Department will work with the US Department of Agriculture, local law enforcement, veterinarians and humane societies to enforce existing laws and to identify and shut down unlicensed auctions.

OHIO WILL WORK WITH ZOOS TO IDENTIFY SAFE PLACES TO KEEP CONFISCATED OR IMPOUNDED DANGEROUS WILD ANIMALS: A safe and appropriate location to house confiscated or impounded dangerous wild animals is essential to enforcing existing animal cruelty and public health laws, as well as future Ohio laws regulating these animals. Ohio will

work with zoos to identify their ability to accept animals that are confiscated or impounded and help meet their needs.

NEW LEGAL POWERS WILL BE PROPOSED BY NOVEMBER 30: A task force including representatives of the Humane Society of the United States, county prosecutors, and veterinarians—led by the Department of Natural Resources—has been crafting a new legal framework for the General Assembly’s consideration that would give Ohio the authority to regulate dangerous wild animals. That task force will complete its work and submit its report by November 30.

OHIO WILL WORK WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO IDENTIFY THE LOCATION OF POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: Ohio will establish toll-free hotline and website and work with local law enforcement agencies, veterinarians, county humane societies, and other stakeholders to identify potential problem locations where dangerous wild animals are kept so that the appropriate authorities can ensure all existing laws and regulations are being followed and enforced.

A COPY OF THE EXECUTIVE ORDER CAN BE VIEWED HERE:

<http://governor.ohio.gov/Portals/0/pdf/executiveOrders/EO%202011-24K.pdf>

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