



**SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE**  
**STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT**  
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**sBill Number:** H. 3531 Signed by Governor on May 11, 2017  
**Author:** Crawford  
**Subject:** Wild Cats, Apes, and Bears  
**Requestor:** House of Representatives  
**RFA Analyst(s):** Gable  
**Impact Date:** June 15, 2017

**Estimate of Fiscal Impact**

	<b>FY 2017-18</b>	<b>FY 2018-19</b>
<b>State Expenditure</b>		
General Fund	\$0	\$0
Other and Federal	\$0	\$0
Full-Time Equivalent Position(s)	0.00	0.00
<b>State Revenue</b>		
General Fund	\$0	\$0
Other and Federal	\$0	\$0
<b>Local Expenditure</b>	Undetermined	\$0
<b>Local Revenue</b>	Undetermined	\$0

**Fiscal Impact Summary**

This bill is expected to have an undetermined expenditure impact on the local government as the cost to local animal control is unknown. Additionally, the local revenue impact is undetermined as the number of fees that would be paid is unknown. This bill would have no impact to expenditure or revenue for the General Fund, Other Funds, or Federal Funds.

**Explanation of Fiscal Impact**

**Signed by Governor on May 11, 2017**

**State Expenditure**

N/A

**State Revenue**

N/A

**Local Expenditure**

This bill bans a person from importing, keeping, purchasing, having custody or control of, breeding, or selling, a large cat, non-native bear, or great ape within this state beginning January 1, 2018. Currently, the state is one of five that has no requirements on the private ownership of exotic pets.

The bill specifies that the bans do not apply to veterinary hospitals, wildlife enforcement officers, and similar entities. Also, a person in legal possession of such animals before January 1, 2018 is allowed to keep the animal for the remainder of the animal's life so long as the possessor is registered with the proper animal control authority and pays a one-time fee of \$500 per site at

which the animal(s) is to be located and an annual fee of \$100 per animal kept, among other requirements. These fees will be used to cover the costs of enforcing this chapter. A person who violates this chapter must be fined no more than \$1,000 or imprisoned for not more than 30 days for a first offense and fined no more than \$5,000 or imprisoned for not more than 90 days for a second offense.

Local animal control is responsible for regulating, restricting, or prohibiting the possession of large cats, non-native bears, and great apes. It is estimated that there are between 10,000 and 20,000 large cats in the United States. However, the number of large cats, non-native bears, and great apes in the state is unknown. Also, the number of locations where these animals are kept is unknown. Therefore, the cost to local animal control to monitor these animals and the facilities is undetermined.

Also, hearings associated with this bill would be brought to the local court with the appropriate jurisdiction. As there is no data available to determine how many violations would occur under this bill, there is no way to determine the number of additional hearings that would occur due to this bill. However, we assume the number of violators is likely to be small due to the assumed low number of owners of large cats, non-native bears, and great apes privately kept within the state. Therefore, we expect any increase in the number of hearings could be managed within the existing budget. If the number of additional hearing does increase significantly, the result would be a backlog of cases in the court's calendar.

Additionally, a violator of this bill could be incarcerated within a local jail for up to 90 days. There is no data available to determine how many violations would occur under this bill so there is no way to determine the increase in imprisonment in the local jails. However, we assume the number of violators is likely to be small due to the assumed low number of owners of large cats, non-native bears, and great apes privately kept within the state.

However, individuals are allowed to keep any large cat, non-native bear, or great ape, the individual owned prior to January 1, 2018. The estimated life span for some large cat breeds in captivity is 15 to 20 years. A chimpanzee, which is considered a great ape, has a life span as long as 40 years in captivity. Therefore, any costs associated with this bill to the local government should diminish over time as there will be fewer animals privately owned.

### **Local Revenue**

This bill makes it unlawful for a person to import, keep, purchase, have custody or control of, breed, or sell a large cat, non-native bear, or great ape within this state beginning January 1, 2018. This includes transactions conducted via the internet. However, a person in legal possession of such animals before January 1, 2018 is allowed to keep the animal for the remainder of the animal's life so long as the possessor is registered with the proper animal control authority, pays a one-time fee of \$500 per site at which the animal(s) is to be located, and pays an annual fee of \$100 per animal kept among other requirements.

A representative of the International Fund for Animal Welfare estimated that there are well over 10,000 large cats in the United States. However, the number of large cats, non-native bears, and

great apes within the state is unknown. Also, the number of locations where these animals are kept is unknown. Therefore, any revenue associated with the fees collected is undetermined.

Though an individual is allowed to keep any large cat, non-native bear, or great ape, the individual owned prior to January 1, 2018, he is not allowed to acquire any additional animals after January 1, 2018. Therefore, any fees collected by the local government should diminish over time as there will be fewer animals privately owned.



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Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director