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## Ohio will draft new rules for exotic animals

### Kasich allows Strickland's executive order to lapse. Humane Society hopes loss is 'temporary setback'

By Bob Downing  
Beacon Journal staff writer

Published on Thursday, Apr 07, 2011

Ohio is letting its newly imposed rules on exotic animals lapse and will begin the process of drafting new regulations.

That announcement came Monday from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in a teleconference.

On Jan. 6, former Gov. Ted Strickland signed a 90-day emergency executive order that banned new exotic pets in Ohio and allowed existing pets only under tougher rules.

The measure banned Ohioans from keeping "dangerous wild animals," including large cats, bears, wolves, chimpanzees, crocodiles and large constricting and venomous snakes.

Those who had such animals could keep them only if the owners registered with the state. Breeding and selling such animals is prohibited under the order.

Strickland's order was part of a strategy to keep potential livestock restrictions the Humane Society of the United States had proposed off the ballot.

But Gov. John Kasich let the rules die Wednesday, when the 90 days were up, officials said.

Ohio will revisit the issue of exotic animals and begin discussions with stakeholders, including Ohio zoos, veterinary groups, the Maryland-based Associations of Zoos and Aquariums, the Animal Owners Association of Ohio and the Humane Society, said Laura Jones, an ODNR spokeswoman.

Ohio was not confident it had the legal power to ban exotic animals under the language in the executive order, said Scott Zody, the deputy director of natural resources.

It is possible action might be requested of the Ohio General Assembly to strengthen Ohio's legal position on exotic animals when the review is complete, Zody said.

The Humane Society is disappointed the ban is expiring but hopeful Ohio will adopt new rules quickly, said Wayne Pacelle, president and chief executive officer of the national group.

He called the expiring order "a temporary setback . . . that does not scuttle the agreement."

His group will monitor exotic animals in Ohio, he said, and is working with legislators to adopt rules against cockfighting and puppy mill operations.

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That complies with Ohio's agreement with the humane society.

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