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29 April 2019

Mr Colleague,

The Wild Animals in Circuses (No.2) Bill has been introduced by the Government into the House of Commons. The Bill will ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses in England by January 2020. This will prohibit a circus operator using any wild animal in performance or exhibition.

The introduction of the Bill follows other measures the Government has taken to strengthen our position as a world leader on animal protection. This includes a ban on ivory sales to protect elephants, and delivering Finn's Law to strengthen the protection of service animals.

At present, a ban stands to impact on two travelling circuses which are currently licensed under Defra's Welfare of Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (England) Regulations 2012, which were introduced by the Government as an interim measure whilst parliamentary time was found to introduce a ban. The Regulations are due to expire in January 2020 and the Government has confirmed that there would be a ban in place by then.

Some of the animals which currently perform in circuses include reindeer, zebras and camels. The Government holds the view that the use of wild animals in travelling circuses has no place in modern society and does nothing to further the conservation or our understanding of wild animals.

If you would like to discuss this Bill further, I would be pleased to meet you. My office can be contacted at ps.david.rutley@defra.gov.uk.


DAVID RUTLEY MP

