*Pick one intro sentence and/or add your own to address the specific recipient. This letter specifically references research on Shrine Circuses, which may or may not be appropriate if you are writing about other circus events or wild animal acts.*

*Intro for letters to city council or board of county commissioners:*I am requesting that you only allow circuses that do NOT include wild animals.

*Intro for local businesses who may be asked to sell circus tickets:*
I am requesting that you only sell tickets for circuses that do NOT include wild animals.

I have been researching the plight of performing wild animals and feel compelled to provide you with some information about wild animal circuses.

Circus applications submitted by Colorado Shrine clubs to local communities state that they contract with Jordan World Circus (Jordan) to provide circus events as fundraisers for the Shrine clubs. Jordan no longer has a USDA license for their wild animals. Therefore, this company can no longer receive USDA violations under its own name. However, the summary of violations when Jordan did have a USDA license indicates how they operate ([Attachment 1](https://www.mediapeta.com/peta/PDF/Jordan%20World%20Circus%20Factsheet_2011-01-14.pdf)). Jordan contracts with other animal providers to provide wild animal entertainment. Jordan also provides human performers. Carson and Barnes is a common animal provider for Jordan World Circus, often through local Shrine Clubs. A summary of Carson Barnes USDA violations is included ([Attachment 2](https://www.mediapeta.com/peta/PDF/CarsonBarnes_fact.pdf)).

The abuse of circus animals is also documented in numerous, publicly available videos. Here is an example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9xNi-1LdUo>

Elephants, lions, tigers, bears, baboons, monkeys, camels are wild animals, despite docile-looking animals in your community; or a misperception that domestication comes at the end of a whip, chain, electric prod or bull hook. Domestication is a genetic change that takes hundreds to thousands of generations of selective breeding for certain traits. Often, the public views elephants as similar to horses, in that they are another herbivore for riding. However, elephants are not designed to carry weight on their backs because they have sharp protrusions on their vertebrae and it is painful for them to have weight on their backs ([Attachment 3](https://www.thedodo.com/what-happens-inside-elephant-ride-1733390285.html)).

These captive wild animal performers typically spend over 90% of their lives confined or chained and are transported in crates, trailers, or rail cars about 11 months a year. They may be confined or chained in place for days (in their own waste) and subject to extreme temperatures while travelling; and only out of chains or close confinement to perform. Many of the animals performing in circuses are designed to walk dozens of miles a day. Lack of exercise and long hours standing on hard surfaces are major contributors to foot infections and arthritis, the leading causes of death among captive elephants. Some circus handlers pretend that the repeated swaying of chained elephants is dancing. In reality, it’s called “zoochosis”, which is a captivity-induced mental illness.

Because circus life is not natural and cannot meet the needs of these animals, they pose an unpredictable risk. Some examples: During a 2014 Moolah Shrine Circus show in Missouri, three elephants escaped from their handlers in the children’s rides area after becoming stressed by circus noise. In June 2017 elephant escaped from Circus World in Baraboo, Wisconsin. In 2010, an elephant named Viola had escaped from the Cole Bros. Circus in Virginia. A tiger escaped from its confinement in Isis Shrine Circus show at Salina, KS in 2013. In September 2017, a Bengal tiger escaped during a transport in Atlanta. Police were called to respond and killed the tiger after it attacked a dog. ([Attachment 4](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/09/07/tiger-shot-and-killed-police-former-star-ringling-bros-and-barnum-bailey-circus/640844001/))

Transport safety issues that put people and the animals at risk, have also been documented. In November 2017 a truck transporting three elephants on an interstate highway in Georgia caught fire (under the hood). The elephants were waiting along an interstate for another trailer to pick them up. ([Attachment 5](http://www.wrcbtv.com/story/36883762/semi-fire-causing-delays-on-i-24-eb))

In January 2018, the bottom of a Carson and Barnes trailer transporting elephants gave out on a highway in Oklahoma, with the metal floor scraping on the highway, sparking grass fires. ([Attachment 6](http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/01/25/elephants-wait-for-ride-on-oklahoma-highway-after-trailer-stalls.html))

While Carson and Barnes is a common circus animal provider, they are not the only one and every major circus that uses animals has been cited for violating the minimal standards of care set forth in the United States Animal Welfare Act. Therefore it is not a matter of using a different circus animal supplier. Circuses cannot meet the needs of these animals because circuses are business enterprises and the wild animals are commodities.

Additionally about 18% of Asian elephants in the US are infected with tuberculosis – the type that transmits to humans (Mikota, SK, A Brief History of TB in Elephants). Elephant to human TB transmission has occurred with trainers and caretakers ([Attachment 7](http://www.slate.com/blogs/wild_things/2015/03/24/elephant_tuberculosis_epidemic_zoo_and_circus_animals_passing_tb_to_humans.html)). Eventhough TB transmission from elephants to circus attendees has not (yet?) been documented, Wisconsin, Maine and Dallas have denied entry of elephants in recent years based on TB status or not having a recent enough test.

As people become informed about the abusive realities of wild animal performers, they typically want no part of it and do not want to take their children to the circus. A recent Gallup poll found that two thirds of the US public is concerned about the wild animals in circuses. At the same time, circuses using only human talent are among the most popular and are growing.

The Shrine clubs often states that the funds go to the transportation fund to transport families to the Shrine hospital. It is a false choice to think that an animal circus is needed to help sick children and their families. In fact, another Colorado Shrine chapter no longer uses wild performing animals. In 2015, the largest Shrine Circus producer in the country, Bill Cunningham, who also happens to be a Shriner, stated that he will no longer use animal acts. He says, “I’ve tried to listen to the mothers who said they didn’t want their kids to grow up and learn that the animals they saw had been probed and poked and proded and chained to floor.” ([Attachment 8](https://www.greensourcedfw.org/articles/dallas-based-shrine-circus-producer-drops-wild-animal-acts-shows)).

I am asking that you only allow circus events without wild animals.