

How the America COMPETES Act Amends the Lacey Act: FACT VS. FICTION

FICTION:

- ❌ People would no longer be able to own exotic pets if the America COMPETES Act becomes law.
- ❌ Zoos and wildlife sanctuaries would no longer be able to operate if the America COMPETES Act becomes law.
- ❌ Every species of wildlife would be affected by the new restrictions of the America COMPETES Act.
- ❌ It's okay for people to have pets that are members of species designated under the Lacey Act as "injurious."

FACT:

- ✅ People would still be able to own exotic pets if the America COMPETES Act becomes law. They simply wouldn't be allowed to import or move certain harmful wild species across state lines.
- ✅ If the America COMPETES Act becomes law, zoos and wildlife sanctuaries would still be allowed to own, exhibit, or care for every single species they currently do.
- ✅ The Lacey Act amendments in the America COMPETES Act apply only to invasive and injurious species that have been deemed harmful to humans or the environment, like various carp or zebra mussels, not every wildlife species.
- ✅ Species designated as injurious under the Lacey Act are listed that way because they are harmful to humans or other wildlife. They pose a clear danger and, as such, are never suitable pets.

MORE INFO:

The Lacey Act limits trade in species considered to be "injurious" to humans, agriculture, forestry, or wildlife. These include invasive species that can damage ecosystems, harming our environment, economy, and health. You can see the current list of injurious species [here](#).

The America COMPETES Act, the technology and innovation bill that passed the House of Representatives on February 4, makes the following changes to the Lacey Act:

- It amends the Lacey Act to prohibit the movement of injurious species across state lines. This makes perfect sense—we shouldn't disperse species that can cause harm across a wider geographical area. Shipments of injurious species generally occur for the exotic pet trade, and no species that is designated as putting the well-being of people and the environment at risk should be owned as a pet.
- It allows for an emergency designation of a species as injurious if the species poses an imminent threat. The emergency listing would last for up to three years, giving experts time to fully assess the risks. This ability to respond quickly is necessary when looking at a new or fast-moving wildlife problem.
- Any non-native species that has not been recently imported into the United States wouldn't be able to enter the country until officials determine it doesn't pose a risk as an invasive species. This would not affect species that are already regularly part of trade. This is a commonsense effort to get ahead of new potential threats and make sure a species is safe before allowing them into our country.

Read the relevant bill language starting on page 1,661 of the [America COMPETES Act](#).



The Animal Welfare Institute strongly supports the means by which the America COMPETES Act would strengthen enforcement of the Lacey Act, our nation's first wildlife protection law.