



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

Caroline Lucas MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3JR

T 08459 335577  
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk  
[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

Your ref: ML.C0034.MR.04.06.14  
Our ref: MC349516/SC

27 June 2014

**From Lord de Mauley**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Natural Environment and Science

Dear Ms Lucas,

Thank you for your letter of 4 June about the absence of the Wild Animals in Circuses Bill from the recent Queen's Speech.

The draft Wild Animals in Circuses Bill we published in April last year proposed to allow travelling circuses in England to continue to use wild animal acts up until December 2015. Although a Wild Animals in Circuses Bill was not mentioned in the recent Queen's Speech, I can reassure you it remains the Government's position that a bill ending this outdated practice should be introduced as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Currently, a ban stands to impact on two travelling circuses that operate with just 23 wild animals. Both circuses are licensed under Defra's interim Welfare of Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (England) Regulations 2012 and are subject to regular announced and unannounced welfare inspections. Inspections so far have not found anything untoward. Indeed, the circuses themselves have reported some benefit in terms of more systematic involvement of their own vets with the animals concerned.

The licensing scheme will stay in place to ensure that any wild animals used in travelling circuses continue to be kept to a high welfare standard until a ban comes into force.

Yours sincerely,

*Rupert de Mauley*



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE