

BOB BARKER

Bob Barker Productions Inc.

9201 Wilshire Blvd.

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Michell Hicks, Principal Chief
Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation

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██████████

Dear Principal Chief Hicks,

As someone who has spent most of my youth on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota and who shares your Native American heritage, as well as being a strong advocate for the rights of animals, I respectfully request the opportunity to meet with you next month to discuss the sad situation of captive bears in Cherokee. I share the concern of PETA as well as of tourists and a number of wildlife experts that the bears exhibited in Cherokee, N.C., are not being treated humanely.

Because of their intelligence, their great strength and dexterity, and their need to explore and forage, bears have an especially hard time coping with confinement, particularly when their cages are cramped and devoid of any items that would allow them to engage in natural behavior. When kept without room to roam and without any opportunity to investigate, climb, dig dens, build nests, and seek food, bears quickly become stressed and develop neurotic types of behavior. The pacing, begging, and moaning evident in the bears displayed in Cherokee are signs that their most basic needs are not being met.

The bear pits at Cherokee Bear Zoo and Chief Saunooke's Trading Post and cramped cages at Santa's Land are among the cruelest conditions that I've heard about for captive bears. The bears have nothing to do all day long but pace the hard, barren floors of their enclosure and beg for a morsel of food from visitors. The pits prevent the bears from seeing their surroundings or fully utilizing their exceptional sense of smell. Surely, the good people of Cherokee will agree that with all that is known today about the complex needs of these amazing animals, the archaic caging and public feeding must go. Many tourists recognize that the bears are miserable and find these exhibits both demeaning and outdated.

Cherokee has so much to offer, such as its beautiful mountains, museums, cultural and historical exhibits, Native American shops, friendly residents, and casino. The caged bears may have been a big attraction at one time but are now seen as an embarrassment to the community and should be permanently closed down.

Thank you for giving this urgent matter your serious consideration. I look forward to meeting with you. I can be reached through Debbie Leahy at ██████████ or by phone at ██████████.

Sincerely,



Bob Barker