

April 24, 2019

John Baker, Assistant Chief
 Central District Office
 California Department of Fish and Wildlife
 [REDACTED] centralenforcementdistrict@wildlife.ca.gov

Via electronic submission

Re: Steve Martin Apparent Violation of 14 CCR § 671.2

Dear Chief Baker,

I am writing on behalf of PETA and its more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide to request that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) investigate Steve Martin dba Steve Martin's Working Wildlife for apparent violations of Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, § 671.2(a) by allowing an adult Kodiak bear named Tag to have direct contact with the public at a private party in Los Angeles, California.

On April 20, 2019, Dan Bilzerian [reportedly](#) held a party at 10979 Chalon Road, Los Angeles, California 90077—an address registered to Ignite International, LTD, a company with which Bilzerian is associated (Ex. A, Ignite business documents). According to an [Instagram post by Jay Tabiza](#), a bear named [Tag](#) was exhibited at this party. *See* Video 1; Ex. B (screen shot of Tabiza post showing “tag.thebear” tagged in the post). Tag is a Kodiak bear [owned and exhibited by Steve Martin](#). *See also* Ex. C (Steve Martin Restricted Species Permit No. 1228, listing Tag in the inventory of animals). Photographs and videos of Tag at this party show him in direct contact with and in close proximity to the public. *See* Video 2 (Bilzerian feeding Tag, also available [here](#)); Ex. D (Tag sitting within a few feet of a crowd of women, also available [here](#)); Ex. E (Tag trying to catch a cookie from a guest's mouth, and standing within a few feet of a crowd of women, also available [here](#)).

Steve Martin's restricted species permit states that “[t]he permittee is required to follow all of the applicable requirements listed in §671, Title 14, of the California Code of Regulations (CCR).” Ex. C. Section 671.2(a)(10) requires that animals “be handled so there is *no perceived risk to the public* . . . with sufficient distance allowed between animal acts and the viewing public to assure safety to both the public and the animals.” Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, § 671.2(a)(10) (emphasis added). Section 671.2(a)(10) also requires that “[a]nimals on display shall be contained within an escape-proof area or enclosure at all times when not under the immediate control of a handler.” *Id.* A restricted species permit “may be suspended or revoked at any time . . . for failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the permit or for failure to comply with any provision of the Fish and Game Code or regulations adopted pursuant thereto.” *Id.* § 671.1(c)(6). CDFW can also assess a “civil penalty of not less than five hundred dollars (\$500) nor more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for each violation.” Cal. Fish & Game Code § 2125(a).

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Tag is a full-grown six-year-old male Kodiak bear. Ex. C. Bears are inherently dangerous wild animals and [captive bears](#) have caused at least 6 documented deaths and over 60 documented human injuries in the United States since 1990. The photographs and videos from Bilzerian's April 20th party show Tag dangerously close to and in direct contact with guests, which demonstrates a clear "perceived risk to the public." Tag is not under the "immediate control of a handler." *See* Video 1 (the handler(s) are standing behind Tabiza, who is feeding Tag); Ex. E (same); Video 2 (Bilzerian is feeding Tag and the handlers are not visible); Ex. D (same). There is no indication that Tag was confined "within an escape proof area." It appears that there may have been two thin strands of electric wire in front of the crowd of women, which is the only visible attempt to prevent Tag from walking into the crowd. *See e.g.*, Ex. D. However, the top strand of wire appears to be only a few feet off the ground, and would certainly not prevent Tag from reaching the crowd standing behind this "fence." According to wildlife veterinarian Dr. Christine Capaldo, Kodiak bears have long, sharp claws and powerful shoulder muscles used for digging. They are inherently dangerous and can swipe without warning inflicting disfiguring wounds often to the face, scalp and upper body leading to hemorrhage, infection, and death.

The conditions under which Steve Martin exhibited Tag at this party were extremely dangerous and posed a demonstrable risk to the public, in violation of Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, § 671.2(a)(10). PETA urges CDFW to revoke Steve Martin's restricted species permit pursuant to Section 671.1(c)(6), and to assess the maximum penalty pursuant to Cal. Fish & Game Code § 2125(a).

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter with you at your earliest convenience and look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,



Michelle Sinnott
Counsel, Captive Animal Law Enforcement

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