



October 5, 2017

Waded Cruzado
President, Montana State University

Dear Dr. Cruzado,

I'm writing again on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) with new information about The Great Bear Show, which appeared at Montana State University (MSU) earlier this year, despite [warnings](#) that the show's operator, Bob Steele, has a disturbing history of violating federal Animal Welfare Act regulations. Now, a recently released U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [report](#) of an inspection conducted on your campus confirms several animal-welfare concerns.

Based on evidence gathered at a recent performance, the most serious violations appear to be ongoing, and PETA has brought these additional concerns to the attention of the USDA. On your grounds, Cindi the bear was observed pacing, likely because she didn't have any opportunity to engage in important natural types of behavior. The inspector noted that "[p]acing in black bears is an abnormal behavior pattern and can indicate stress, frustration, or an underlying medical condition." Steele was also cited at MSU after it was found that there were no visual barriers in the enclosures to allow the animals to avoid each other or get out of view of the guests. There were also no furnishings, water tubs, or straw or other bedding that would allow the animals to express normal postural or social adjustments.

Furthermore, Steele has [now been cited](#) by the USDA *three times* for not providing a young bear named Barney with adequate veterinary care after he was observed to have large patches of hair loss around his neck and face and halfway down the sides of his body. The inspector noted that the bear was scratching himself in the areas of the hair loss, and it was noted in another inspection that his chronic condition had been present since at least November 2014. While bears in the wild are active for up to 18 hours per day, spending their time exploring diverse terrain, Barney has been confined to a travel trailer, possibly for more than a month and likely without any opportunity for exercise. According to bear expert Jay Pratte, who has more than 25 years of experience in captive-bear husbandry, "[T]hese bears are enduring poor husbandry and care and neglect of their basic biological needs and considerations, and their constant exploitation for public presentations and sales of merchandise is a form of abuse."

The USDA has cited Steele multiple times for handling bears in a manner that doesn't ensure their safety or that of the viewing public. Currently, he allows members of the public—including young children—to have their photographs taken with the bears and uses only a [thin Plexiglas barrier](#) and a leash attached to a chain around the animals' necks to separate them from visitors who are being photographed.

We urge you to prioritize animal welfare and public safety by refusing to host Steele's cruel bear show again and allowing only wild animal-free entertainment moving forward.

Very truly yours,

John Di Leonardo
Assistant Manager, Animals in Entertainment
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

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