



## Invasive Species Hearing For H.R. 669 To Be Webcast Live

**The hearing for H.R. 669 will be webcast live the morning of April 23, 2009.**

*By The SmallAnimalChannel News Division*

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Thursday's Congressional subcommittee hearing on a bill that could restrict the type of animal species available as pets will be webcast. The hearing is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. EDT. To watch or listen to the hearing live, [click here>>](#).

Dubbed the Nonnative Wildlife Invasion Prevention Act, H.R. 669 would mandate the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to approve or disapprove most nonnative animal species, including birds, fish, reptiles and small mammals, for importation and trade within the United States. The government would need to assess every such species, even those that have been in the United States for decades.

Only animal species proven to be of no or minimal potential risk to the environment, agriculture, or animal or human health would be allowed into the country if the legislation passes.

The pet industry and many pet owners have voiced significant opposition to the bill, concerned largely with its potential impact on the economy, their livelihoods and their freedom to keep pets. They have also voiced concerns that the bill would not effectively address its stated purpose of controlling potential invasive species.

Proponents of the legislation, largely animal rights and environmental groups, contend the legislation would be more cost-effective than attempting to control and eradicate invasive species.

The legislation "is urgently needed because hundreds of millions of non-native wild animals are imported and traded in the United States every year, with little oversight, despite potential harm to the economy, the environment, public health and safety, and animal welfare," according to a statement a coalition of supporting groups plan to submit to the hearing.

Those groups include the Humane Society of the United States and environmental activist group Union of Concerned Scientists. UCS membership exceeds 75,000 and, despite the organization's name, is open to anyone paying at least \$25.

To support their position, the groups cite invasive species issues involving Asian carp (brought over as a game fish and food source), the Indian mongoose in Hawaii (an island state), Chinese snakehead fish (believed to have come from Asian food markets, which often carry live fish for human food), and Burmese pythons in Florida (brought over as pets).

In addition, the groups note imported animals could carry disease, such as Salmonella, monkeypox and avian influenza.