

Originating Committee: Environment and Ecology

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Intended Recipient(s): Missouri Department of Conservation, Box Turtle Racing Organizations

Support Ethical Box Turtle Racing

WHEREAS, box turtle racing is a popular event at county fairs and other festivals across the state, with Missouri hosting 78 such events, some featuring more than 200 box turtles; and

WHEREAS, conservation protocols, husbandry, and public education have often been severely lacking at these events; and

WHEREAS, Missouri is home to two box turtle species (genus *Terrapene*) that require high adult survivorship to maintain steady populations; and

WHEREAS, a large percentage of the turtles used in these races are caught from the wild and removed from their natural habitat; and

WHEREAS, poor animal husbandry can lead to illness or death of the box turtles with the possibility of diseases being transmitted back to wild populations; and

WHEREAS, many organizers have been receptive to conservation efforts from advocates and have worked to turn turtle races into conservation-centered events; and

WHEREAS, some turtle race organizers continue to reject all conservation initiatives and ethics, despite being made aware of the issues; and

WHEREAS, the wildlife agencies of California, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, and Virginia have adopted regulations to prevent mistreatment of wildlife resources at turtle races, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Conservation Federation of Missouri assembled at Lake Ozark, Missouri, this 2nd day of March, 2024, recommends that the Missouri Department of Conservation develop and implement regulations that allow for the continuation of ethical turtle races while curtailing those that abuse wildlife.

Searchable Keywords: ethical turtle racing, Missouri Department of Conservation, box turtle conservation, wildlife regulations, festival events, conservation protocols.

Expires: March 2nd, 2029