

Legislation and Regulation Committee

Committee Members: R. T. Bowyer, V. Brack, Jr., A. W. Ferguson (Chair) R. W. Kays, T. J. McIntyre, D. Odell, E. A. Rickart, R. Rodriguez, S. R. Sheffield, D.W. Sparks, E. W. Valdez.

Mission:

The Legislation and Regulations Committee was formed in 1976 to monitor and provide input into the state and federal regulation and legislation process on such issues as endangered species, trapping and harvesting regulations, and the use of animals for experimental purposes.

Information Items:

(1) This year saw the transition to a new Chair for the Committee who was partially tasked with addressing the increasing complexity of regulations regarding importation of mammalian specimens for scientific research. The idea is that by working together with the regulatory agencies, e.g., the Center for Disease Control (CDC), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Customs Border Patrol (CBP), and the Department of Transportation (DOT), the ASM can help to develop responsible regulations that both protect human health while encouraging scientific research. Following the model used by ASM in regard to IACUC regulations, we hope to reach out and work directly with the lead agencies development and implementing these regulations (e.g., the CDC). With this in mind, we had an initial meeting with Glen Degruy, Head of the Import Permit Program (IPP), from the CDC and Meredith Pyle, lead on bat importations for the IPP, at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, Illinois on 7 December 2017. The CDC recently compiled a list of 22 species of bats that are currently being regulated as Category A, Infectious Material, with a recommendation that all material from these species be handled in a Biosafety Level-3 facility. This regulation is exceedingly restrictive and will limit research on and the ability to house specimens for most scientific institutions affiliated with the ASM. At this initial meeting we discussed the need for additional face-to-face meetings and provided specific examples of how the ever-changing landscape of importation regulations is negatively impacting our ability to conduct research on mammals in general and bats in particular. Glen agreed to try and convene an additional meeting at the CDC with DOT personnel and ASM members in attendance to try and discuss ways forward. The CDC also expressed an interest in attending the ASM Annual Meeting in Kansas but unfortunately could not make it due to scheduling and financial constraints.

(2) According to Ellen Paul, the CITES petition to suspend or eliminate the requirement for validation of shipments moving under COSE permits was pulled. As of August 2017, Ellen was working to reinstate the petition with the White House Office of Management and Budget and the DOI Office of Policy Management and Budget.

(3) Discussions regarding the Environmental Protection Agencies “Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science” administrative rule in regards to how such rigorous transparency requirements will affect access to and compliance with existing legislation are currently under way among the Committee.

(4) Ellen Paul from the Ornithological Council reached out to the Committee to join in discussions regarding developing regulations for the use of drones in wildlife research, which could have far-reaching impacts on mammalogists using this new technology. There is currently a letter being circulated addressing the Airborne Hunting Act and Ellen encouraged ASM to submit a letter to the DOI Solicitor joining in their response to the proposed legislation. In addition, gathering data from ASM members regarding application for state permits regarding drone use would prove very useful, especially if they are working in collaboration with or represent state or federal agencies.

Action Items:

(1) The Committee would like to request a small amount of funding to offset costs of sending representative(s) of ASM to Atlanta, Georgia to meet with the CDC regarding importation regulations. We request that \$3,000 USD be allocated to the Committee to cover travel costs to and from Atlanta for at least 2 Committee members.

(2) The Committee would like to request that the Executive team provide a request to the membership at-large during the Annual Meeting to contact us regarding their experiences with permits related to drone use for mammalian research.

Respectfully submitted,
Adam W. Ferguson, Chair
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