

September 19, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

The Bay Nature Institute is a Bay Area-based nonprofit organization that promotes the exploration, celebration, and stewardship of the natural world of the San Francisco Bay Area. I am writing to you now to support the proposed legislation banning the release of commercially raised butterflies in the City and County of San Francisco.

While we understand that the intentions of those who purchase and release commercially raised butterflies may be to add a “natural” touch to important events and celebrations, the reality is that such releases can have a number of harmful impacts on our wild butterfly populations, including on species—such as monarch butterflies—that are already facing a number of serious challenges from human practices resulting in reduced habitat and food sources.

We know that farmed populations of any animal may carry disease organisms that wild populations have not developed an immunity to. In addition, interbreeding between farmed and wild populations may reduce the genetic fitness of butterflies that have evolved to survive in the wild. There is also an element of cruelty involved in packaging living butterflies in cages or envelopes for shipment, often over long distances.

We would much rather that the residents of San Francisco and the Bay Area learn to appreciate the beauty and diversity of observing our region’s native butterflies in their natural habitats (including on the streets of downtown San Francisco!) than see these amazing animals as objects for our entertainment.

Thank you for considering this legislation that would ban the sale and release of commercially raised butterflies in San Francisco.

Sincerely,

David Loeb, Executive Director