Dear Winnipeg City Counsel,

I am writing on behalf of the Manitoba Herpetological Society (MHS) in regard to the Responsible Pet Ownership By-law review. As per the standing policy committee and the executive policy committee I encourage the city council to oppose any form of inclusion regarding a request for future research time involving exotics - specialty pets for the RPO. Winnipeg has a foundation of responsible pet owners and support the present bylaw in place that was created with support of the Winnipeg animal advisory committee and stakeholders.

We at the MHS are in support of keeping a restrictive list for exotic pets from the by-law amendment rather than a more restrictive positive list. We do not believe that the positive list is what Winnipeg needs and will do more harm than good to the pet industry as a whole. It could lead to a decrease in available pet care for existing pets, it bans many suitable pet species without critical expert input, it would be difficult if not impossible to enforce, it could lead to an underground reptile trade which would compromise the safety of those pets. We encourage you to not support further efforts to ban exotic/specialty pets.

There seemed to be a lot of involvement of outside groups such as World Animal Protection (WAP) and ZooCheck in this amendment. We would like to see science play a bigger part in future changes, rather than biased groups pushing a specific narrative such as WAP and ZooCheck.

Thank you,

Devin Sinclair (VP of the MHS)