

February 19, 2011

Hon. Jeanine Notter
19 Whittier Rd
Merrimack, NH 03054

RE: Legalizing Quaker (a/k/a Monk) Parakeets in New Hampshire

Dear Representative Notter:

As President of the Quaker Parakeet Society (QPS), an international organization with members in New Hampshire, let me first thank you for all you have done and are trying to do to prevent Suzanne Burke and other citizens of New Hampshire from having to give up their precious pets. The QPS is here to provide you with any information about Quakers that you may need to succeed in having the rule of the Fish and Game Commission repealed. Enclosed, please find the position statement on Quakers from the American Federation of Aviculture, a national organization of aviculturists with members worldwide.

What is most significant is that little scientific evidence exists concerning the Quaker, and certainly nothing that could support a determination that this very intelligent little bird has ever interfered with native animal populations or damaged farmers' crops anywhere in the United States. As you will read in the enclosed paper by Professor Pat Anderson, Quakers are the only parrot that builds its own nest and, thus, does not disturb native birds' breeding. To the contrary, the Quaker has been found to share its own nest with other birds and animals. The enclosed February 2011 *Scientific American* article states that 90 percent of introduced (non-native) animals have no (zero) impact on local ecology.

Without scientific or qualified study, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission's prohibition on the mere possession of Quakers as pets has no rational basis and serves no compelling state interest. Such

Page 2 -

is particularly true considering that no Quakers have been sighted in NH in the past 100 years despite their being sold in NH pet stores and by NH breeders for decades. I have enclosed for you the results of the Audubon Society's annual Christmas bird count regarding Quakers in NH. It goes back to 1909 and not one wild Quaker has been spotted by bird watchers in NH. Unfortunately, a few anecdotes from power companies that permitted a Quaker nest to grow too large before the company performed any maintenance has resulted in a few states declaring (not very loudly) the Quaker/Monk to be illegal. It seems to have been a knee jerk reaction with no research to back it up.

As mentioned in my earlier e-mail to you, the QPS has also worked with power companies to insure that wild Monk nests are removed from power poles in a humane manner and have paid for the construction of alternative nesting poles/platforms for the wild birds. However, there is no qualified research that concludes that wild Monk Parakeets interfere with utility company poles or been the cause of outages any more than native animals such as squirrels.

You may know already that there once existed a *native* North American parrot species – our only one – the Carolina Parakeet, which existed from the Ohio Valley to the Gulf of Mexico. It was rendered extinct in the late 19th - early 20th century due to its habitat being destroyed by “invasive” and “non-native” humans, its being shot by farmers and for sport, and its use in the millinery trade for decorations on ladies' hats. The last known captive one died in 1918 at the Ohio zoo. A lecturer at the 2010 AFA convention opined that the wild Quaker Parakeet fills the niche left by the extermination of the Carolina Parakeet.

Quakers have become a tourist attraction in New York City and I recommend that you visit www.BrooklynParrots.com. A baseball field in Bay Ridge, NY was recently restored and re-named in recognition of the Quakers who live there with nesting platforms installed for them as part of the renovation. (See enclosed article.) A brand of rum made in Texas features a Quaker on its label in admiration of the Quakers that dwell in the trees near the distillery. These birds are much loved by anyone lucky enough to come in contact with them. Therefore, the Quaker Parakeet Society urges you to do whatever you can to have the ban on the birds lifted in the state of New Hampshire so that the people who own them may keep their pets and others will have the opportunity to enjoy them as much as we do.

Yours truly,

John Davey
President, Quaker Parakeet Society