

## **US Chamber of Commerce Opposes S373**

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WILMINGTON, NC, December 16--In a letter addressed to the Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works the US Chamber of Commerce takes a position opposing S. 373 that echoes the position of the United States Association of Reptile Keepers. The bill ostensibly written to address the issue of feral Burmese pythons in the Everglades is overreaching and circumvents the scientific listing process called for by the Lacey Act through the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

USARK believes that Burmese pythons have been sensationalized in the media and S. 373 has become overly politicized. USARK president Andrew Wyatt stated, "I don't think there is any doubt that the Humane Society of the United States is trying to hijack this bill and use it as a tool to destroy the trade in high quality captive bred reptiles". The HSUS has a long standing ideological position opposing all reptiles in captivity. They have lobbied extensively to pass as broad a version of S. 373 as possible.

As written, S. 373 would not achieve its stated goal of addressing the problem of feral pythons in the Everglades. It would, however, have a tremendous impact on the trade of captive bred reptiles in the US and abroad including a number of pythons and Boa constrictor. The trade in captive bred reptiles is a \$3 billion a year industry and US exports account for 82% of trade worldwide. S. 373 if passed would be devastating. Thousands of jobs would be lost and scores of small family owned businesses would be bankrupted.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, opposes S. 373. According to the US Chamber of Commerce, "if enacted in its current form, this legislation would adversely impact tens of thousands of businesses". The Chamber goes on to state that, "If, however, Congress intends to pass a ban to limit the import of the Burmese Python, then it is essential that the proposed ban be drafted as narrowly as possible".