

**F**errets are prohibited in California. But did you know that California is home to over 500,000 ferrets by the California Department of Fish and Game's own 1989 estimate? Did you know that a national ferret magazine rates California among it's top three states for numbers of individual subscriptions? Did you know that there are five ferret organizations, clubs, or associations in California? Clearly, the domesticated ferret is here to stay. And it should be a legal member of the many families that own one.

All domesticated pets are considered by law to be an individual's private property, property the government has no right to seize without due process. The only reason ferrets are prohibited in California is because they appear in a list of prohibited *wildlife!* Our Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has misclassified ferrets as wild, hurting thousands of good people by turning them into criminals with this disregard for the truth. DFG also wastes our tax dollars harassing citizens owning a *domesticated* pet that is safer to the environment and people than the cat or dog.



You can help change this absurd law. Write the legislators below. Tell them it's time for California to join the rest of the country and the world by decriminalizing ferret ownership. Tell them to stop wasting precious tax-payer dollars and (even more precious) governmental good will, by penalizing good citizens who own, and love, ferrets. If this form is blank, call your county registrar of voters (dial 411) to find out who represents you in Sacramento. Fill in the information, photocopy the form and distribute it to pet stores and veterinarians' offices. You can also help by making a contribution to *Californians for Ferret Legalization*, sponsors of the bill to legalize ferrets in California.

Help us right a serious wrong. Contact Californians for Ferret Legalization, 410 Mtn. Home Road, Woodside, CA, 94062. To find out how else you can help, call (650) 851-3750. Or e-mail [ferretnews@aol.com](mailto:ferretnews@aol.com).

**WANTED**  
*Letters to your Legislators and the Governor!*

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***Write your Legislators now—tell them to vote yes on SB 1093.***

Assemblymember \_\_\_\_\_ Senator \_\_\_\_\_

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Tel \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Tel \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Governor Gray Davis Governor's Office State Capitol Sacramento CA 95814**

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**Californians for Ferret Legalization 410 Mountain Home Road Woodside CA 94062 (650) 851-3750 [www.ferretnews.org](http://www.ferretnews.org)**

## How You Can Help

Please consider the following facts when you write to your representatives and our Governor. Ask your friends, family and colleagues to write too - this bill won't pass unless the people of California speak out!

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Smithsonian Institute, Museum of Natural History, and over 155 zoos and zoological societies all classify the ferret as domesticated. The *domesticated* ferret does not belong in the hands of the California Department of Fish and Game, whose mandate is *wildlife*. This agency was never intended to control, let alone prohibit, any domesticated species.

The California Department of Fish and Game's survey of all 50 states revealed that there is not a single documented feral population of ferrets anywhere in the US. That's an incredible fact given the feral populations of domesticated cats, dogs, horses, goats, sheep, rabbits and pigs that abound in this country.

Ferrets are tiny, averaging only 2-3 pounds. They are not territorial or protective of their food. Statistical reports of ferret bites show this pet to be 200 times less likely to bite and do serious harm when compared on a per-capita basis to the domesticated dog. Clearly, domesticated ferrets are safer to people than many other domesticated animals.

The domesticated ferret has not had a measurable impact on municipal animal control facilities or humane society shelters. The domesticated ferret simply does not survive outdoors. Domesticated ferrets are also routinely spayed or neutered for health reasons and therefore can not multiply easily. The current bill, SB 1093 calls for all ferrets to be spayed or neutered if over 6 months of age.

Concerns by veterinarians that prohibition of the domesticated pet ferret is not in the animals' best interests, that unvaccinated animals are not in the public's best interests, and that treatment and vaccination of these animals may lead to a compromise of their licenses, have led the California Veterinary Medical Association to strongly support legalization of the ferret in California.

As many as 500,000 domesticated ferrets may reside in this state illegally. That may represent 250,000 California households. Why do so many California citizens violate the prohibition against ferret ownership? Because they know the law is wrong.

## Sample Letter to Legislator

Dear Senator (or Assemblymember -- insert your legislator's name here),

The California Department of Fish and Game's own survey shows that no feral populations of ferrets exist anywhere in this country. That makes the ferret a terrific pet that has no impact on the environment. It also makes criminalizing ferret ownership ridiculous. It's long overdue that California join the rest of the states on this continent and decriminalize the ownership of a harmless family pet, the domesticated ferret.

SB 1093 will legalize the estimated 500,000 ferrets that are here already in California, requiring that they be spayed or neutered and vaccinated against rabies. This will allow California ferret owners safe access to the veterinary care these companion animals deserve and will be a step towards a rational policy for the one of the safest domesticated pets to people and the environment.

Can 48 states be wrong on this issue? Should ferret owners in this state face confiscation of their pet, fines and even jail time for something virtually everyone else in the country can do with impunity? California should decriminalize hundreds of thousands of people for owning a pet that is considered the same as a cat or dog everywhere else.

Please support SB 1093.

Respectfully,

(Put your name and address here. You must include your address so your legislator knows you are a constituent -- otherwise your letter will not count!)