

Dear Concerned Citizen,

Thank for your e-mail concerning the welfare of the elephant Queenie. We are deeply committed to using our Animal Welfare Act (AWA) authority to ensure that regulated animals receive care in accordance with the law. When our Animal Care (AC) officials find that an animal is in a condition of unrelieved suffering, we will confiscate the animal and move it to another facility that will provide the animal care and treatment that meets the AWA requirements.

You may be interested to know that on August 20, 2009, AC officials, in conjunction with law enforcement officials, removed the elephant Jewel from Mr. Davenport's facility in Leggett, Texas, following the issuance of a notice of confiscation and a thorough investigation into the elephant's care and treatment. Our officials also removed the elephant Tina, which the owner relinquished to the U.S. Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service. On Saturday, August 22, 2009, Jewel and Tina arrived at the San Diego Zoo, which is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and was chosen because it has demonstrated the ability to care for Jewel in accordance with the AWA requirements. Both elephants are being housed together at the facility.

The owner has voluntarily surrendered his AWA license. Unless he engages in activities for which he would need to be licensed—for example, he sells, trades, exhibits, transports, or delivers for transport his remaining elephant, Queenie—our Agency has no regulatory authority over the care provided to this animal. Nevertheless, we currently have an open investigation into his prior activities, and we will pursue additional enforcement action if necessary and as our findings warrant.

Thank you again for writing.

Kevin Shea  
Associate Administrator  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service