



Media Advisory

For Immediate Release
Video Footage of Elephants Available

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SF COMMISSION RECOMMENDS TRANSFER OF ELEPHANTS AT SF ZOO TO SANCTUARY

Commission Cites Inadequate Space and Cold Weather

San Francisco, CA . . . The San Francisco Commission of Animal Control and Welfare last night passed a resolution calling on the Board of Supervisors to take immediate action to order the transfer of three surviving elephants at the San Francisco Zoo to a sanctuary.

The action comes in the wake of the controversy surrounding the Zoo's euthanasia of a middle-aged Asian elephant named Calle in March. In passing the resolution, the Commission joins Supervisor Fiona Ma in urging the Zoo to close its elephant exhibits, which a 1999/2000 City audit characterized as "out of date" and "especially poor." On March 25, Ma, chair of the San Francisco Zoo Audit Select Committee, sent a letter to the Zoo calling for the release of Maybelle, Lulu and Tinkerbelle, the surviving elephants, to a sanctuary. Ma's position is also supported by Supervisors Ammiano and Gonzalez.

At the hearing, the Commission heard public testimony, including a statement from elephant expert Pat Derby, founder of the Performing Animal Welfare Society, one of two U.S. sanctuaries that have offered to immediately take the elephants at no cost to the City or Zoo. Derby's Ark 2000 sanctuary offers a 100+ acre, naturalistic environment where quality of life can be restored to elephants ailing from decades in captivity.

Based on zoo-industry references and elephants' medical records, the Commission's resolution states that, "poor conditions, including Zoo enclosures of less than _ acre for African elephants and _ acre for Asian elephants, have deprived elephants of adequate exercise and forced them to stand on hard compacted surfaces, causing serious degenerative joint and foot problems in all three surviving elephants."

It concludes: "The San Francisco Zoo does not have the space or the climate to provide an adequate or appropriate environment for elephants."

"We commend the Commissioners for taking a stand for the elephants who have suffered for decades in terrible conditions at the San Francisco Zoo," said Deniz Bolbol, elephant specialist for In Defense of Animals. "As the legal 'owner' of the elephants, the City will make the ultimate decision regarding their fate. It is now up to the Board to do what is in the elephants' best interest and immediately send them to sanctuaries before it is too late."

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