



City of Seattle

January 26, 2015

Deborah Jensen, President and CEO  
Woodland Park Zoo  
5500 Phinney Ave. N.  
Seattle, WA 98103

Dear Dr. Jensen:

After the sudden death of Watoto last summer, we were all reminded that elephants in captivity are fragile. We have learned from experts world-wide, including your own 2013 Task Force, that elephants need room to roam, and need warm spaces where they can choose to socialize or not with other elephants.

Sixteen months have passed since the Task Force on the Woodland Park Zoo Elephant Exhibit and Program issued its report, and we appreciate that you and your board have decided to transfer our two remaining Woodland Park Zoo elephants to a new location.

We now request that you adopt the recommendations of your Task Force – particularly regarding the elephant's need for more space. We also ask you to consider a warmer dryer climate than Seattle's, and to make certain that their new home will continue to provide the positive reinforcement they have received under your care.

We know that common wisdom in the past emphasized that live elephant exhibits provide a positive learning environment for children and families. We believe times have changed and our priority should be to focus on Chai and Bamboo's well-being for the remainder of their lives. Like you, we remain strongly committed to conservation of elephants in the wild and in their natural habitats.

We recognize that the care and disposition of the elephants and all other WPZ animals is primarily the Zoo's responsibility under the Management Agreement between the City and WPZS. That said, WPZS has agreed to comply with City-approved disposition policies.<sup>i</sup> We urge you to adopt the recommendations from the Task Force, and transfer Chai and Bamboo to a facility that is focused primarily on the welfare of the animals. That may mean a GFAS-approved sanctuary, rather than an AZA-accredited zoo.

Specifically, consistent with the Task Force's recommendations<sup>ii</sup>, we ask you to use the following factors in making your decision, with the goal of finding the best place for Chai and Bamboo to live out the remainder of their lives. Before you make a final decision, we would like to know how your proposed location will meet and exceed the following criteria identified by the

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Task Force; in other words, we want to be assured that our elephants' welfare will be the deciding factor:

- Increase the size and complexity of the yard to provide additional behavioral and physical diversity for the elephants. Currently, Chai and Bamboo share one acre, or individually have .5 acre each. As recommended by the Task Force, their space should increase per elephant, and sufficient space should be available so the elephants can choose, "where, how and with whom to spend their time."<sup>iii</sup>
- Provide a drier, warmer climate, or assure that warming barns and wind/rain shelters are available for Chai and Bamboo with multiple entrances.
- Assure they have expanded activities and enrichment practices to improve their behavioral health and support good medical health

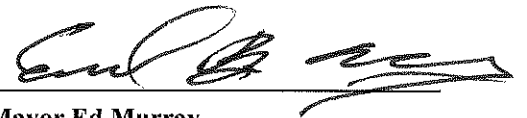
We would appreciate your advising us of your decision about where to place Chai and Bamboo no later than February 27, 2015 and your plans and schedule for transporting them. An independent third party has offered to pay the cost of transporting these two elephants should you recommend they go to a sanctuary.

We want to be certain that Chai and Bamboo's living conditions will improve in order to satisfy all criteria recommended by the Task Force.

Respectfully,



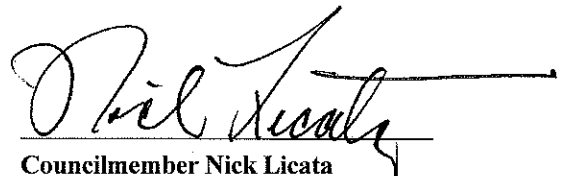
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw



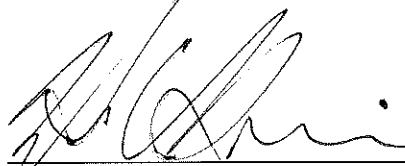
Mayor Ed Murray



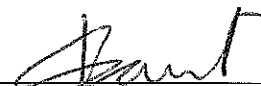
Councilmember Bruce A. Harrell



Councilmember Nick Licata



Councilmember Mike O'Brien



Councilmember Kshama Sawant

cc: Woodland Park Zoo Board Members

<sup>1</sup> Woodland Park Zoo Operations and Management Agreement, December 17, 2001 Section 15.3 (c).

<sup>2</sup> Task Force on the Woodland Park Zoo Elephant Exhibit and Program Final Report, October 22, 2013, page 20

iii. Ibid.