

MOTION

The Los Angeles City Council recently learned that the Los Angeles Zoo has been fined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for violating the Animals Welfare Act (AWA). The USDA is the federal agency responsible for the enforcement of the act and oversees the welfare of animals at zoo's across the nation.

In April 2007, the USDA issued the LA Zoo a stipulated penalty of \$3,281 for failure to provide adequate veterinary care to Gita the elephant and Judeo the chimpanzee. Both whom died at the LA Zoo in 2006.

Gita's death prompted an investigation by the USDA, case #CA06314-AC, because of the controversial circumstances surrounding her death which included possible evidence she had been left unattended overnight for more than nine hours with no medical attention despite the fact a zookeeper had observed her in the "downed" position the day before.

During this time, several public record requests had been submitted to the LA Zoo regarding the outcome of that investigation or any correspondence exchanged with the USDA including fine notifications. The LA Zoo failed to provide the requested information in a timely manner and in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

The Council voted again in January of 2009 on whether or not to continue with the \$42 million elephant exhibit. After three Council meetings and three committee hearings on the issue, the zoo had not released any information in regards to the findings of the USDA investigation. The council voted to continue with the exhibit.

According to the LA Zoo, the fine was paid in January 2008. Since that date, the LA Zoo has had six unannounced inspections resulting in eight citations for AWA non-compliance.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Los Angeles Zoo report to the Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee within the next 21 days on the findings surrounding the USDA fine.

I FURTHER MOVE, that the LA Zoo be required to clearly post any USDA findings or stipulated penalties on its website and be posted at conspicuous location the at LA Zoo.

I FURTHER MOVE, that the City Attorney's Office investigate and report back on any possible criminal and/or civil violations by the LA Zoo of the California Public Request Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

PRESENTED BY



TONY CARDENAS
Councilmember 6th District

SECONDED BY


