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Second Elephant at SF Zoo Dies in Less Than Two Months

Animal Protection Groups Call for Zoo To Immediately Close Elephants Exhibits and Send Last Two Surviving Elephants To Sanctuaries

San Francisco, CA. . . . Lulu, a 38-year-old African elephant, died at the San Francisco Zoo. Lulu is the second elephant to die at the Zoo since the Zoo killed Calle, a 38-year-old Asian elephant, on March 7. For the past two of years In Defense of Animals has done everything possible to see the elephants at the Zoo be transferred to a sanctuary because of the elephants' poor health brought on and exacerbated by inadequate enclosures and the cold, damp weather.

Because of the Zoo's procrastination and unwillingness to transfer the elephants to an appropriate environment, such as the sanctuaries, we now have a second tragedy following on the heels of Calle's death. It's a shame and a tragedy that it takes the death of yet another elephant for the Zoo and others to understand that the San Francisco Zoo is literally a death trap for largest land mammal.

In Defense of Animals (IDA) and Citizens for Cruelty-Free Entertainment are calling on the Board of Supervisors to take immediate action to have the two surviving elephants transferred to one of two sanctuaries that have offered to take the elephants at no cost to the City or Zoo.

The groups have presented medical records indicating that the elephants – Tinkerbelle, Maybelle and Lulu – are ailing and will meet the same fate as Calle unless transferred to an appropriate environment. Such an environment would include adequate space to allow freedom of movement and access to a variety of natural substrates and live vegetation, all of which is essential to healing the painful joint and foot problems from which the three elephants currently suffer. Videotape and photographs of the elephants will also be available.

Tinkerbelle, Maybelle and Lulu were all taken from the wild and brought to the San Francisco Zoo in the 1960's. They have for years suffered from health problems associated with captivity. The Zoo has known about these health problems for years, but has failed to do what is clearly in the best interest of the elephants –give them to a sanctuary where they can have some quality of life restored.

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