

Lily Tomlin

To: Kim Smith, Director, Oregon Zoo
Portland Metro Councilors

Dear Ms. Smith and Metro Councilors,

As an advocate for elephants, I am writing to urge you to release the Oregon Zoo's oldest elephant, Packy to an appropriate sanctuary. For 51 years Packy has entertained the people of Oregon. Now it is time for him to retire to a sanctuary, where he can roam freely on many acres of land. I understand that the zoo plans to build an onsite 6-acre exhibit for its elephants. However, that is not enough space for its elephants, who in the wild, roam for miles and enjoy walking on grass, foraging on trees and swimming in rivers.

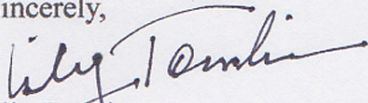
The zoo is facing some serious problems that other zoos have also encountered with keeping elephants. Rama is infected with TB and now Packy is being treated for it as well. This is just one example of the problems elephants in captivity face. Elephants in zoos also suffer from painful joint and foot disease. It is not their nature to stand on a hard surface all day and night. They need to move across huge expanses of grass and soft earth in order to maintain their mental and physical health. Wild elephant expert Dr. Joyce Poole says that elephants who rock their heads back and forth, as Packy does, are suffering from extreme stress.

I know that the Oregon Zoo wants to make the elephants' lives better. And so do the people of Portland. That's why the zoo initiated a bond measure in 2008 to create an offsite multi-acre preserve for the elephants. The voters overwhelmingly supported that measure. This preserve was meant to be used as a retirement home for the elephants. I urge you to maintain that original mission.

It is now 2013 and the preserve is still not a reality. At 51, Packy does not have a lot of time to wait. So I implore you to give him a taste of real freedom and a chance to live out his days where he will be able to live like a real elephant while enjoying the care and love of the staff at an elephant sanctuary such as PAWS in Northern California. I have seen for myself how elephants thrive at PAWS, a sanctuary that I am honored to help support.

Please give Packy his freedom. The people of Portland who love Packy will thank you. And so will I.

Sincerely,



Lily Tomlin
cc: Courtney Scott
Free the Oregon Zoo Elephants

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