

OPEN LETTER

May 30, 2007

To: Parks Board Commissioners and Vancouver City Council

From: Peter Hamilton, Lifeforce

Re: Stop the Aquarium Expansion Process – Proper Public Consultation Needed!

Otter Cruelty Not Part of Aquarium Public Process

The recently released design drawings reveal that, in addition to more dolphins, Northern Fur seals and even beavers who are nocturnal, there will be a river otter exhibit. The public was not advised of this during public consultations regarding the \$80 - \$100 million expansion that will consume 1.5 more acres of precious Stanley Park. Lifeforce repeatedly asked the Vancouver Parks Board what animals would be imprisoned if the Vancouver Aquarium expands.

Any so-called “nuisance” river otters could be captured from the wild (even though boater and otter conflicts can be resolved without captures).

Vancouver Voted for No Zoo

The people of Vancouver said no to a zoo expansion in 1993. Vancouver said no to a BC wildlife theme because most of the proposed exhibits would have included wildlife, such as raccoons and squirrels, who could be seen living free in Stanley Park and Supernatural BC. The public said no more river otters.

One of the controversial proposals was the river otter exhibit. In the old zoo the river otters exhibited abnormal neurotic, stereotypical behaviour due to captivity. The new zoo would not have provided a better enclosure. Lifeforce discovered that more river otters would have been captured. “Otter groups” would be rotated throughout the day so the public could see active animals that are usually nocturnal. The animals not displayed were to be held in tiny squeeze cages. The back of the cage could be pulled forward to squeeze the otters into a box for transport to the exhibit.

Aquarium Otter History

At the Vancouver Aquarium, the sea otter “Clamchops” drowned when trapped under a pool gate in 1983. The media uncovered the death months later. Other otters froze to death because they were fed oily food that affected their fur because of captivity. Otters are still kept in tiny, inhumane cages out of public view.

Some of the sea otters were captured during the Exxon Valdez oil spill and were supposed to have been released. However, they were kept and subjected to repeat blood tests funded by Exxon.

The Aquarium has provided otters to zoos worldwide and could become a major exporter of both sea otters and river otters.

Stop the Expansion Process – Proper Public Consultation Needed

If the Aquarium hid this controversial otter plan then what else are they hiding? How many Northern Fur Seals will be imprisoned and will they be captured from the wild, as

were the sea lions? Will there be Arctic foxes with the cage-crazy animals pacing back and forth like the polar bears did year after year? What is the status of the 1987 Arctic Canada plan to include penguins, narwhals and walruses?

The Aquarium information was misinformation. The information was biased and hid the truth. The Aquarium did not provide information for the public and politicians to be able to make an informed opinion. The Aquarium expansion process must be stopped until a fair and open process is conducted.

The future of Stanley Park and the lives of many animals are in your hands. I wait for your response,

Peter Hamilton
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Lifeforce Report "Just Say No! Let Stanley Park Be!"
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