

ACCREDITATION  
COMMISSION

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October 28, 2011

Joe Torzsok, Chair, Toronto Zoo Board of Management  
Paul Ainslie, Vice Chair, Toronto Zoo Board of Management  
Toronto Zoo  
361A Old Finch Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M1B 5K7

Dear Mr. Torzsok and Mr. Ainslie:

The recent decision by the Toronto City Council regarding the placement of the Toronto Zoo's elephants raises serious concerns on the part of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Accreditation Commission about compliance with AZA Accreditation Standards. The Accreditation Commission believes that the action taken by the Council may place the zoo's accreditation in jeopardy. We formally request written clarification of the Toronto Zoo's compliance with AZA Accreditation Standards 1.3.2 and 6.1 through 6.6, copied below.

**ANIMAL COLLECTION**

*1.3.2. The institution must have a written acquisition/disposition policy that, at minimum, incorporates all requirements contained in AZA's acquisition/disposition policy. (See pages 57 - 61 of these standards for further information).*

*Explanation: Animal acquisition/disposition policies (including breeding loans) should be continually reviewed to keep them current with all local, state/provincial, regional, national, and international wildlife laws. Such policies must also incorporate all rules/regulations/resolutions adopted by AZA regarding hunting ranches, animal auctions, research, pets, participation in SSPs, TAGs, and CAPs, and other issues involving the acquisition and disposition of wildlife.*

*Records must be maintained for all transactions involving acquisition and disposition of animals to and from the collection and must include the terms of the transaction. In making the decision to surplus an animal(s) to a non-AZA accredited facility, the institution must ensure that the receiving institution is willing and able to provide proper care for the animal(s) and that the disposition is done in accordance with AZA's Acquisition & Disposition Policy.*

*Copies of all relevant permits, importation papers, declaration forms, titles, and other appropriate documents establishing a paper trail of legal acquisition must be maintained whenever possible. When such information does not exist (the institution's maintenance of confiscated wildlife) an explanation must be provided regarding such animals.*

#### **GOVERNING AUTHORITY**

**6.1. The governing authority must be supportive of the institution abiding by the AZA Accreditation Standards, Code of Professional Ethics, and Bylaws.**

*Explanation: The Commission must be assured that the institution's governing authority understands and is supportive of the institution abiding by the AZA Accreditation Standards, Code of Professional Ethics, and Bylaws.*

**6.2. The governing authority must recognize and support the institution's goals and objectives.**

**6.3. The governing authority has the responsibility for policy matters and oversight of the institution. The CEO/Director must be responsible for the day-to-day management of the institution.**

**6.4. While the governing authority may have input, the decisions regarding the animal collection must be made by the professionals who are specifically trained to handle the institution's animal collection, staff, and programs.**

**6.5. The lines of communication between the CEO/Director and the governing authority must be clearly defined. Additionally, the governing authority should be structured so that its relationship to the professional staff is clearly understood and followed.**

*Explanation: If clear lines of communication do not exist, a breakdown in the operation of the institution and care of the animal collection could occur. It is essential to have a good working relationship between the governing authority, CEO/Director, and staff.*

**6.6. The CEO/Director should be an ex officio member of the governing authority board or have the opportunity to attend meetings that would affect operations of the institution.**

Please provide this report as soon as possible, but no later than November 18, 2011. The report should be submitted in electronic format (Word or PDF) to Denny Lewis at [dlewis@aza.org](mailto:dlewis@aza.org), and followed up thereafter with a hardcopy by mail. After the report is received, the AZA Accreditation Commission will conduct a formal review to determine if a special inspection or other action is necessary and will notify the institution in writing once a decision has been made.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald E. Moore", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Donald E. Moore, PhD  
Chair, AZA Accreditation Commission

cc: The Honorable Rob Ford, Mayor, and members of the Toronto City Council  
Secretariat to the Toronto Zoo Board of Management  
John Tracogna, Chief Executive Office, Toronto Zoo  
L. Patricia Simmons, Chair, AZA Board of Directors  
Jim Maddy, President/CEO, AZA  
Kristin L. Vehrs, Executive Director, AZA  
Denny L. Lewis, VP Accreditation Programs, AZA  
Accreditation Commission