



April 30, 2012

Budget and Finance Committee
c/o Erika Pulst, Office of the City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Honorable Councilmembers:

*"Nurturing
wildlife
and enriching
the human
experience"*

Los Angeles Zoo
5333 Zoo Drive
Los Angeles
California 90027
323/644-4200
Fax 323/662-9786
<http://www.lazoo.org>

Antonio R. Villaraigosa
Mayor

Tom LaBonge
Council Member
4th District

Zoo Commissioners

Karen B. Winnick
President

Bernardo Silva
Vice President

Elaine Baylor

Sue Downing, D.V.M.

Kimberly Marteau

Richard Lichtenstein
ex officio member

John R. Lewis
Zoo Director

The Zoo Department (Zoo) respectfully submits this correspondence regarding the 2012-13 Mayor's Proposed Budget for your consideration. The Zoo is very much aware of the significant fiscal constraints that the City is facing and has worked to continue to provide a quality Zoo as General Fund support has declined over the past few years. To this end, the Zoo has worked with the City Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Mayor's Office to mitigate/reduce the impact of the proposed reduction in General Fund support in FY 2012-13.

As part of the 2012-13 reduction, 14 vacant positions and the corresponding funding (\$1.0 million) were eliminated. Included in these 14 positions were four positions critical to the Zoo's operations relative to animal care and animal health.

My staff and I have recently met with the Mayor's Office and the CAO to discuss the importance of these positions. They subsequently agreed to support the restoration of the four positions, without funding, to give the Zoo the flexibility to fill them should funding become available during the fiscal year.

Request for Restoration, Without Funding

Zoo Curator – Class Code 4297

The Zoo Curator position serves as the Zoo's Registrar position which is responsible for coordination and management of the official inventory of the Zoo's collection of approximately 1,100 animals. This includes coordinating the centralized records of animal births, deaths and all animal transactions with other institutions. The position is also responsible for all paperwork and record keeping associated with the various permit-issuing regulatory bodies. This is a required function for AZA Accreditation and it is an important duty needed for our USDA licensing.

Principal Animal Keeper – Class Code 4312

A Principal Animal Keeper assigns the duties, establishes work procedures and schedules and reviews the work of the Animal Keepers and Senior Animal Keepers at the Zoo. The Principal Animal Keeper also supervises the requisition and issuance of animal food and supplies to the keeper staff. Finally, a Principal Animal Keeper ensures



An Equal
Employment
Opportunity
Affirmative
Action
Employer

Accredited by the Association
of Zoos and Aquariums

Accredited by the American
Association of Museums

Member of the California
Association of Zoos and Aquariums

workplace safety, proper husbandry training and techniques in the Animal Care Division.

Zoo Veterinarian II – Class Code 2367-2

The Zoo Veterinarian II position is a clinical veterinarian position responsible for the diagnoses and treatment of the Zoo's animal collection using medical and surgical techniques. The position also performs laboratory tests and necropsies to determine cause of death and collect valuable information for future cases. Currently there are only two other Zoo Veterinarians to manage the health of the 1,100 animals in the collection.

Zoo Veterinarian III – Class Code 2367-3

The Zoo has an expanded health care center that includes a full service hospital and quarantine facility. With a large and diverse collection of animals, there is a significant caseload at the Zoo that requires appropriate lead supervision. The Veterinarian III would direct the health care of these animals to ensure that they receive the highest quality of healthcare. Additionally, the Zoo regularly sends and receives animals to and from other institutions. This requires quarantine and testing of the animals which is mandated by the USDA, the AZA and Center for Disease Control regulations to assure the health and safety of the animals before and after any move. The Veterinarian III would also be responsible for coordinating and directing this work, along with maintaining an accurate record of the moves and the status of quarantined animals.

The Zoo's inability to fill these four positions 1) jeopardizes our ability to maintain accurate animal records; 2) impacts the number and rate in which animals can move in and out of the Zoo; and 3) impacts our ability to provide an appropriate level of animal health care to the Zoo's animal collection. All of these issues are concerns with regards to AZA accreditation.

Again, the Zoo Department is very much aware of the significant fiscal constraints that the City is facing; however, the four positions noted above are critical to the future of the Zoo. As a result, the Zoo, with the support of the Mayor's Office and CAO, is requesting that the position authorities be restored without the funding, which will give the Zoo the flexibility to fill these positions should funding be identified.

I look forward to discussing this request with you further and appreciate your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



John R. Lewis, General Manager
Zoo Department

cc: Neil Guglielmo, Mayor's Office
Miguel Santana, Office of the CAO
Gerry Miller, Office of the CLA