



Eric (Roderico) Villanueva <eric.villanueva@lacity.org>

REGARDING CITY COUNCIL FILE #17-0453

Darren Bueno <darrenbueno92@gmail.com>
To: eric.villanueva@lacity.org

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DO NOT SUPPORT THE MOTION TO MOVE BILLY

Dear Mr. Villanueva,

As a resident of Los Angeles, my first memory of an elephant was my first grade field trip to the city's zoo. A young stud named Billy wore through my mind, and ultimately my heart, as I passed through the grade levels and college.

Today, as an LA Zoo educator, I have the privilege to teach and converse with my community about that very elephant. Billy inspires children and adults alike. I can say that with confidence because he has inspired me.

To move Billy from his home would not only be a great disservice to him, but also the community that learns from him.

As a top tier, accredited institution, the zoo provides Billy with an expansive habitat with everything he needs to be an elephant: varied terrain, hills, deep pools, waterfalls, and opportunities for forage and play.

He has built a bond with his keepers, who have a lifetime's worth of **actual** experience working with and caring for pachyderms. The same keepers who got up before the sun rose on this morning of Sunday, July 29, 2018 and every morning preceding to feed, exercise, bathe, and stimulate him.

To say he does not have interaction with the girls is a blatant lie, simply because I **see** it every day, week, and month of the year.

The zoo has several veterinarians on grounds and on call 24/7, which most institutions, unfortunately, cannot afford.

Millions of people visit him every year and are inspired to help his species' survival in the wild. Billy is a beloved ambassador. I have conversations with children that speak of their future as a wildlife researcher or an elephant veterinarian because of him and our girls.

If Billy is moved to a sanctuary, some families will undoubtedly lose that opportunity. The LA Zoo is affordable. Traveling with children on a fixed income to Tennessee or Northern California or wherever is not.

I urge you to look past the **extreme** attempt to use this elephant as a way to end zoos and the connection our community shares with animals.

I urge you to visit the zoo and see our care demonstration, and talk to the individuals who have dedicated their life to this animal.

I urge you to open your mind to a simple conversation.

A conversation I have just about every day.

A conversation about a very special elephant.

Please do not support the motion to move Billy the elephant to a sanctuary.

I beg of you.

Thank you for your time,
Darren "D.J." Bueno, a resident of Winnetka