

NEWS RELEASE

Re: Vancouver Aquarium's Secret Move of Beluga to Sea World, Texas and Pushes Through New Expansion Plan

The Vancouver Aquarium not only secretly moved their last male beluga, "Imaq", BUT has quietly pushed through a controversial new expansion proposal.

Why was the beluga moved without advising the media? Was the beluga in bad shape from the 3 year confinement and the bullying by another in a hidden back pool? Will the Vancouver Aquarium provide the Health Certificate? Lifeforce will be investigating.

A Vancouver Parks Board Staff Report was presented for the April 18th without advising Lifeforce, a group that has been actively involved since the 80s. The Board approved it by 5 to 2 votes. Prior to being voted in, Vision Vancouver had told Lifeforce that they were opposed to any more expansions.

Lifeforce had advised the Board:

1. Prior to any Board decision the public, organizations and others should have had a right to review these new plans and to provide feedback. This is a new expansion proposal and must be subject to such review and public meetings. The new plan will take 8 years to complete and will seek government funding several times in smaller amounts.
2. The Board must not continue to be intimidated by threats of legal action by the Vancouver Aquarium.

Surely, in view of this new proposal, the City is no longer legally bound to any previously Board approved expansion in 2006. The Aquarium did not have the financial government support for the expansion that was to be built for the 2010 Olympics. Therefore, this Board can oppose any further expansion and impact on scarce park land.

3. More Pools Means More Captives. This Board should be able to reopen the expansion issue, the lease, the previously approved referendum question against dolphin captivity, and more.

We must stop the expansion of dolphin pools and their captivity. We must stop the wild captures of river otters, seabirds and others for new displays. We must stop the multi-million dollar fake salmon stream expansions when true salmon conservation monies are needed.

Lifeforce will be urging concerned people to email the Parks Board (pbcomment@city.vancouver.bc.ca) to ask them to hold a new public comment period and oppose this new expansion proposal. This must be done in order to comply with the Board's policies to have public review of expansions, public commitments and moral responsibility to protect animal rights.

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