



February 12, 2009

Vikram Dewan
President and Chief Executive Officer
Zoological Society of Philadelphia
3400 West Girard Avenue
Philadelphia PA 19104

VIA FACSIMILE (215) 243-5288 AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

Dear Mr. Dewan,

Many concerned citizens have contacted the Philadelphia Zoo about the status of the surviving elephants, Kallie and Bette. I have been advised that Zoo officials are responding to questions from the public by claiming that the Zoo plans to send Kallie and Bette to a "sanctuary" outside of Pittsburgh. This statement is absolutely false. The breeding facility where the Zoo plans to send Kallie and Bette is not a "sanctuary." Not only is the facility slated to be a temporary residence for Kallie and Bette while they are forcibly bred, but the elephants will be dominated by bullhooks and confined in a cement barn most of the time – just like at the Philadelphia Zoo. By contrast, a sanctuary offers a lifetime home for animals where they are allowed to live out their lives as close as possible to what nature intended. It is completely misleading to refer to the temporary breeding facility as a sanctuary.

In addition, Zoo officials continually understate Kallie and Bette's ages as 24 years and 25 years in public statements. The zoo's website claims the ages as "Kallie (24) and Bette (23)." These statements are blatant untruths. According to the North American Region Studbook for the African Elephant, both Kallie and Bette were born in 1982 and are 27 years old this year. As you should know, the chances of an elephant becoming pregnant for the first time over the age of 25 are slim, and the risks of such a pregnancy are severe for both mother and baby. The Zoo's continual misstatement of Kallie and Bette as years younger than they truly are is not only factually incorrect, but misleading to citizens as to the health risks inherent in the plans for these elephants. In reality, should the plans to breed Kallie and Bette go through, the elephants face not only great odds against a pregnancy, but life-threatening conditions, and the public is being misled by the Zoo's misstatements.

I ask that you take immediate action to ensure that Zoo representatives (1) stop misleading members of the public that the elephants will be sent to a sanctuary; (2) accurately communicate to members of the public (including the media) the true and accurate ages of Kallie and Bette; and (3) update the Zoo's website to clarify the above-mentioned erroneous information.

Sincerely,

Marianne Bessey
Friends of Philly Zoo Elephants
P.O. Box 7466
Philadelphia PA 19101
Facsimile: 866-644-8381
Phone: 610-733-1248