

From: [REDACTED]

To: Torres, Michael Angelo (DPH - Contractor) <michaelangelo.torres@sfdph.org>

Subject: Stop the Giant Panda Transfer to San Francisco Zoo

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Dear Commission of Animal Control and Welfare,

I am writing to you on behalf of In Defense of Animals (IDA), an international animal protection organization with a 40-year history of defending animals, their guardians, and the environment located in California. It represents over 250,000 supporters, a large majority of whom reside in California, with many calling San Francisco home. I urge you to cancel plans to send giant pandas to the San Francisco Zoo, for several seriously critical reasons.

The zoo is currently in a dire state and unfit for any animal, as evidenced by recent tragic incidents, including a grizzly bear chasing a zookeeper due to a faulty door, a hydraulic door killing a baby gorilla, a penguin being decapitated due to an improper enclosure, and a tiger escape resulting in three people being mauled and a teenager's death. Two of four elephants who were kept there in substandard conditions died within months of each other and the San Francisco City Council forced the zoo to send the remaining two elephants to sanctuary. These incidents highlight systemic failures that prevent the animals from engaging in natural behaviors, leading to widespread depression among the zoo's inhabitants.

Investigators from In Defense of Animals and SF Zoo Watch recently visited and found the conditions to be far worse than their worst expectations. The proposal to bring pandas to this deteriorating facility is highly concerning. Pandas require extensive, specialized care, and housing them in an already crumbling zoo would be irresponsible and cruel. Furthermore, the financial burden is immense, with many cities reporting significant losses from hosting pandas. Notably, the Memphis Zoo faced extreme criticism due to the neglectful death of a panda named LeLe —a fate that could easily befall pandas in San Francisco's substandard conditions. Alarming, the zoo's staff recently cast a unanimous vote of no confidence in the current director, further highlighting the dysfunction within the institution.

Beyond animal welfare and practical concerns, the funding plan to bring in the pandas is inherently corrupt. Mayor Breed plans to remove safeguards that were put in place only recently to tackle widespread corruption which Breed herself was implicated in and fined over \$8,000. Moving forward with this initiative not only jeopardizes animal welfare but also entangles San Francisco in a highly controversial situation and a morally fraught fundraising agreement. Breed's proposal could allow private companies to leverage their donations in exchange for favors. The city's resources would be better spent addressing the current inadequacies of the zoo rather than embarking on an ill-conceived panda program that promises more harm than benefit.

I strongly urge you to reject the panda plans and maintain the safeguards that protect against further mismanagement and corruption. The animals involved depend entirely on your carefully thought-out decision.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]