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## **Famed animal expert Jack Hanna endorses completion of Los Angeles Zoo's Pachyderm Forest**

*Calls project "a model for humane elephant care that will educate generations to come on the threats Asian elephants face in the wild."*

Los Angeles – January 5, 2009 -- Jack Hanna, one of the world's most respected experts in animal care, today endorsed the continuation of the Los Angeles Zoo's new Pachyderm Forest following a personal visit to the construction site, calling the project "a model for humane elephant care that will educate generations to come on the threats Asian elephants face in the wild."

In a letter to the Los Angeles City Council, Mr. Hanna said he wanted to personally review the progress on the future home of Billy and other Asian elephants, one of the world's most endangered species. Mr. Hanna's endorsement comes amid lobbying efforts by a small group that is attempting to pressure the Los Angeles City Council to discontinue the project, even though it is one-third into construction, and send Billy away to an elite area largely inaccessible to the public located hundreds of miles from Los Angeles. (The full text of Mr. Hanna's letter as well a special video he filmed devoted to explaining Los Angeles Zoo elephant facts can be found at [www.billyshome.com](http://www.billyshome.com).)

"My goal was to review the criticisms about the life Billy and other Asian elephants will lead in this new home to determine if they have any merit," Mr. Hanna said. "I concluded that critics of the project are relying on misinformation as well as outdated data about elephant care collected from zoos that aren't comparable at all to this one."

Mr. Hanna continued: "What I did find was a project taking shape that will set a new standard for the care of elephants at zoos, providing a home that will be even larger than what Asian elephants enjoy at the San Diego Wild Animal Park. Not only will Billy and any future residents have a huge amount of room in which to roam, they will continue to enjoy 24-hour monitoring, state-of-the-art medical care, love, nurturing and a level of attention that sanctuaries cannot provide."

Mr. Hanna is director emeritus of the Columbus Zoo in Columbus, Ohio, and the host of Daytime Emmy award winning, "Jack Hanna's Into the Wild," for Outstanding Children's

Series and “Jack Hanna’s Animal Adventures,” the most watched and longest running syndicated wildlife show in the world. He has spent more than three decades promoting wildlife conservation, educating children and working tirelessly as a public advocate for animals.

Said Mr. Hanna: “Los Angeles cannot forfeit this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to become a world leader in educating the public on the dangers elephants face. Sanctuaries are too expensive and too out-of-the-way for working families. There is no way Billy can possibly receive better treatment than he gets here. Some 20,000 schoolchildren each month, as well as thousands of working families, will have the chance to meet Billy and other rare Asian elephants up close as they thrive in a spacious Pachyderm Forest, taking home with them an appreciation of what these majestic animals give to our world. These children are our next generation of conservationists. They deserve to see these beautiful creatures up close.”

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