



**For Immediate Release**

## **Seven in 10 voters in LA Times online poll support keeping Billy at the Los Angeles Zoo**

*More than 45,000 respondents say "zoos are a healthy environment for elephants and provide a public service."*

Los Angeles, CA - Jan. 16, 2009 - In a Los Angeles Times online poll, an overwhelming 7 in 10 voters have supported keeping Billy the Asian elephant at the Los Angeles Zoo, where his new state-of-the-art Pachyderm Forest educational habitat is being built.

More than 45,000 respondents in less than 10 days have let it be known they agree with wildlife expert Jack Hanna that Billy should stay at the zoo, and that "zoos are a healthy environment for elephants and provide a public service." The online poll was taken after Hanna endorsed the completion of the elephant habitat after touring the site personally; calling it "a model for humane elephant care that will educate generations to come on the threats Asian elephants face in the wild."

The habitat will provide Billy with an area larger than Asian elephants enjoy today at the San Diego Wild Animal Park, along with constant attention and the best available medical care from a team of veterinarians.

However, a small group is seeking to pressure the Los Angeles City Council into killing the project even though it is one-third into construction, has attracted \$5 million in private donations and was funded with money from two bond measures overwhelmingly approved by voters. In addition, the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Assn. has pledged to pay the annual debt service so there is no annual cost to the city. The small group of activists is seeking to send Billy to an elite area hundreds of miles from Los Angeles that charges individuals \$200 for admission, which will put him both geographically and financially out of reach of working Los Angeles families and the 20,000 schoolchildren a month who visit him.

"We are grateful that so many people decided it was time to speak up to save Billy's home by registering their opinion with the LA Times online poll," said Tom Mankiewicz, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Greater Los

Angeles Zoo Assn. "This clearly shows people are seeing through the myths and distortions being spread by those who want to take Billy away from the millions of people who love him who visit us each year."

More information is available at [www.Billyshome.com](http://www.Billyshome.com).

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