



For Immediate Release

Slash Jams for Billy the Elephant

Musical Artist Joins Thousands of Supporters Mobilizing to Urge Los Angeles to Complete LA Zoo's Pachyderm Forest

Los Angeles, CA - Jan. 13, 2009 - Iconic rock guitarist Slash today said that he has joined the thousands of supporters mobilizing to urge the Los Angeles City Council to complete the LA Zoo's Pachyderm Forest, a state-of-the-art new educational habitat for Billy and other endangered Asian elephants.

As a touring musician, both with Guns N' Roses and more recently with Velvet Revolver, Slash has visited numerous zoos throughout the world during his free time. Slash has been a longtime supporter of the Los Angeles Zoo, where he gained his appreciation for animals as a child growing up in Southern California, and knows many of the animal handlers personally.

"I just want everybody to try to support this cause because it's very important," Slash said. "Billy has been taken care of at the zoo for about 20 years. He has four keepers who have been at his beck and call, taking care of him and providing him with optimal medical care and everything else that he needs. This enclosure is one of the nicest enclosures he could possibly have."

During a visit with his family to the zoo on Sunday, Slash toured the planned new habitat that will house endangered Asian elephants in an area larger than what Asian elephants now enjoy at the San Diego Wild Animal Park. During his visit, Slash took time out to tape a video of support from inside an area of the habitat already finished. The video can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBDVJcAR2XY>

"It's really beautiful," Slash said. "It's really well done. It gives the elephants an amazing amount of room to move around. I'm a huge advocate of this particular exhibit."

As the father of two young children, Slash regularly brings his family to the Los Angeles Zoo so his children can meet the animals and learn of the fragile state many of them face in the wild. Slash has come to know numerous members of the zoo staff, describing them as 'one of the most conscientious

caretakers of animals I've ever met."

Said Karen Poly, a 25-year animal keeper at the zoo: "I've always been impressed with Slash's knowledge of animals. In many cases, he is even able to identify the different subspecies, something that most people can't do."

Earlier this month, Jack Hanna, one of the nation's best-known animal care experts and director emeritus of the Columbus Zoo in Columbus, Ohio, called the Pachyderm Forest "a model for humane elephant care that will educate generations to come on the threats Asian elephants face in the wild" after personally inspecting the site.

However, a small group of activists is seeking to pressure the City Council to halt the Pachyderm Forest one-third into construction, even though the council approved the project 13-2 in 2006. In addition, voters overwhelmingly approved two bond measures supplying funds for the project. And, approximately 70% of the more than 60,000 people participating in a Los Angeles Times online poll last week voted that "zoos are a healthy environment for elephants and provide a public service."

The activist group wants to send Billy to an exclusive area hundreds of miles from Los Angeles, where individuals pay \$200 a person to visit. That would deny working families and the 20,000 schoolchildren a month who now meet Billy any chance of ever seeing an Asian elephant up close again to learn first-hand of the dangers these majestic animals face.

Please visit www.billyshome.com for more information on the Pachyderm Forest.

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