



**Filed Testimony of  
Donald P. Hutchinson, President & CEO  
The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore  
March 11, 2019**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Capital Budget Subcommittee  
Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Hearing**

Mister Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is grateful for this opportunity to appear before you to discuss the Fiscal Year 2020 capital budget request of \$5 million for a variety of projects that are necessary for the Zoo's basic infrastructure improvements, correcting life-safety and animal welfare deficiencies, renovating a number of animal exhibits, repairing and upgrading Waterfowl Pavilion, and constructing a shade structure at the Polar Bear Tram stop.

Renewal of the Zoo's facilities is an ongoing and necessary process in order to continue to meet the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements (our regulatory agency) and Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) standards. Failure to meet USDA requirements could result in fines and/or immediate closure of the facility. AZA accreditation is a lease mandate. The Zoo must continue to make improvements to its physical plant, correct outstanding problems, perform proper upkeep, and address new problems as they arise to maintain our AZA accreditation. The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is most appreciative of the capital budget support that the State of Maryland has made over the course of 27 years. With the exception of the shade structure, the parking lots, and the Waterfowl Pavilion updates, the bulk of the funding requested for Fiscal Year 2020 will be used for items that may not be viewed as guest amenities. But, they are critical to both good animal husbandry and proper care of the 143-year-old facility.

With 2018 having been the rainiest in the history of the City of Baltimore, it created quite a Y.E.A.R. at the Zoo. Yes, Expect Additional Rain and Your Edifices Are Rotting became the daily outlook. The physical impact of the more than 72 inches of precipitation has included trees falling on the perimeter fence in a variety of places, roofs on a significant number of animal holding areas needing replacement, and the further erosion of the pavers on Parking Lots A and B.

The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is situated in one of the few old-growth forests left in the City of Baltimore and this area has thousands of trees. The Zoo sits on 135 acres, of which 40-50 acres are developed. The weather last Spring was almost continuously wet. Each year, April, May, and June are the highest attendance months at the Zoo and in 2018 each of those months brought a significant number of days of rainfall. May 2018 was the wettest May on record. June was only slightly drier. The net result of all of that water was that trees began to fall in multiple places around the Zoo, but most frequently along Buffalo Yards Road. On June 7th - one hour before school children on field trips were scheduled to arrive and walk down Buffalo Yards Road - an oak tree fell onto an ash tree which caused the tulip poplar to fall across Buffalo Yards Road. While falling trees are not uncommon in the Zoo, this was the first of several tree falls that have occurred that have done considerable physical damage to the grounds and had the possibility of causing severe injury to anyone in the area. We have been fortunate that no one has been hurt.

The Elephant House was constructed in 1926 for the Zoo's first elephant, Mary Ann. For many years, it housed elephants and hippos. This building's roof must be renovated. This also includes the soffit, doors, and gutters being replaced. During last year's visit by the AZA Visiting Committee, the Zoo was cited for the mold and lead paint in the building. Although used as a storage area that staff are not in on a daily basis, AZA determined that this was not an appropriate condition for staff at any time. The mold and lead paint issues have been remediated. But, if these exterior items are not dealt with, the mold will return. The Maryland Historical Trust has a perpetual historic easement on the exterior of the building.

Parking Lots A and B are used by guests every day. Both have surfaces that were considered progressive and environmentally advanced at the time they were installed in the 1970s. The pavers were intended to be a pervious surface that made "wise use" of Druid Hill Park's beautiful parkland to act as drainage. Over the years, it has become an impervious surface with rainwater just running off the parking lots. A heavy rain and tree roots can cause the stormwater drainage pipes to move and collapse. Due to potholes and ruts, automobiles have sometimes been damaged from being driven on the lots and the surface has become dangerous upon which to walk or push a stroller or wheelchair. This first installment of \$1,000,000 of a multi-year request for funding-for removal of the current surface and creating necessary stormwater management through proper grading, curbing, and rain gardens on the parking lots-will be used for design.

Waterfowl Pavilion area is one of our rental facilities. It is also the site of our most important annual fundraiser, Brew at the Zoo. It is used well and used often. Rain and erosion have taken a toll. Trees are in jeopardy from vendor trucks parking and compacting soil on the roots. As a result, the grounds need regrading and some trees must be removed. The pavilion is close to 90 years old and needs a new floor, upgraded exterior lighting, new hose bibs and water fountains. Due to the fact that its stormwater management may be the same as for Parking Lots A and B, this project should be done at the same time as the lots. This is the first of a three-year request.

The Polar Bear Tram Stop shade structure will provide a permanent shade shelter for guests awaiting the tram to exit the Zoo as well as create a new, safer curb cut on which guests will enter and exit the tram. The current temporary shade structure has frequently blown over when winds are somewhat high and does not sufficiently shade those under it. As there may be a 15-20 minute wait for a tram, guests may be in the sun for an uncomfortable amount of time. Additionally, the angle of the curb cut is difficult for guests to navigate by foot, by stroller, or by wheelchair. This year's \$100,000 for this project is the first of a two-year request and will be used for design and engineering costs.

The Zoo's purposes are two-fold: conservation and education. The Zoo saves animals from extinction. Its business is quite literally about life and death. Approximately 95% of this living collection is of conservation concern (in Maryland, nationally, and/or internationally) and the species need the care and protection that the Zoo provides. Participating in the breeding and care of endangered and threatened animals is the most important part of the work that we do. All zoos that are part of the AZA are focused on the Species Survival Plan (SSP), a program designed to protect specific threatened and endangered species found on all continents of the world. These capital projects highlight the critical role the State plays in

maintaining both the living collection and the infrastructure that are the core assets of the Zoo.

Saving animals from extinction is a valuable contribution to the high quality of life we enjoy in Maryland. The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is the preeminent zoo in the State of Maryland with a long history of providing young and old the opportunity to see, smell, and touch animals from several continents. These experiences are not replicable in any other way for those who do not have the ability to travel to other countries and are valuable even to those with that capability. The Fiscal Year 2020 capital items are not as exciting as those of the previous years with the dramatic changes made to the habitats of iconic species. They are, however, equally important in their contribution to the well-being of the animals in our care, be that because of direct impact to the animals' environment or because of indirect impact for sites on grounds that provide earned revenue.

The Maryland Zoological Society and the staff of The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore are extremely grateful to the State for its capital project funding and to this Subcommittee for its long standing support. **We respectfully request approval of full funding for The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore.**

# MARYLAND ZOO

Example of Tree Falling Due to Rain



# MARYLAND ZOO

## Waterfowl Pavilion Rain Damage and Erosion



# MARYLAND ZOO

Elephant House Exterior



# MARYLAND ZOO

Leaks and Mold Due to Rain

Chimpanzee House



Elephant House





**Filed Testimony of  
Donald P. Hutchinson, President & CEO  
The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore  
March 11, 2019**

**House Appropriations Capital Budget Subcommittee  
Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Hearing**

Madame Chair and Members of the Subcommittee:

The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is grateful for this opportunity to appear before you to discuss the Fiscal Year 2020 capital budget request of \$5 million for a variety of projects that are necessary for the Zoo's basic infrastructure improvements, correcting life-safety and animal welfare deficiencies, renovating a number of animal exhibits, repairing and upgrading Waterfowl Pavilion, and constructing a shade structure at the Polar Bear Tram stop.

Renewal of the Zoo's facilities is an ongoing and necessary process in order to continue to meet the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements (our regulatory agency) and Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) standards. Failure to meet USDA requirements could result in fines and/or immediate closure of the facility. AZA accreditation is a lease mandate. The Zoo must continue to make improvements to its physical plant, correct outstanding problems, perform proper upkeep, and address new problems as they arise to maintain our AZA accreditation. The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is most appreciative of the capital budget support that the State of Maryland has made over the course of 27 years. With the exception of the shade structure, the parking lots, and the Waterfowl Pavilion updates, the bulk of the funding requested for Fiscal Year 2020 will be used for items that may not be viewed as guest amenities. But, they are critical to both good animal husbandry and proper care of the 143-year-old facility.

With 2018 having been the rainiest in the history of the City of Baltimore, it created quite a Y.E.A.R. at the Zoo. Yes, Expect Additional Rain and Your Edifices Are Rotting became the daily outlook. The physical impact of the more than 72 inches of precipitation has included trees falling on the perimeter fence in a variety of places, roofs on a significant number of animal holding areas needing replacement, and the further erosion of the pavers on Parking Lots A and B.

The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is situated in one of the few old-growth forests left in the City of Baltimore and this area has thousands of trees. The Zoo sits on 135 acres, of which 40-50 acres are developed. The weather last Spring was almost continuously wet. Each year, April, May, and June are the highest attendance months at the Zoo and in 2018 each of those months brought a significant number of days of rainfall. May 2018 was the wettest May on record. June was only slightly drier. The net result of all of that water was that trees began to fall in multiple places around the Zoo, but most frequently along Buffalo Yards Road. On June 7th - one hour before school children on field trips were scheduled to arrive and walk down Buffalo Yards Road - an oak tree fell onto an ash tree which caused the tulip poplar to fall across Buffalo Yards Road. While falling trees are not uncommon in the Zoo, this was the first of several tree falls that have occurred that have done considerable physical damage to the grounds and had the possibility of causing severe injury to anyone in the area. We have been fortunate that no one has been hurt.



The Elephant House was constructed in 1926 for the Zoo's first elephant, Mary Ann. For many years, it housed elephants and hippos. This building's roof must be renovated. This also includes the soffit, doors, and gutters being replaced. During last year's visit by the AZA Visiting Committee, the Zoo was cited for the mold and lead paint in the building. Although used as a storage area that staff are not in on a daily basis, AZA determined that this was not an appropriate condition for staff at any time. The mold and lead paint issues have been remediated. But, if these exterior items are not dealt with, the mold will return. The Maryland Historical Trust has a perpetual historic easement on the exterior of the building.

Parking Lots A and B are used by guests every day. Both have surfaces that were considered progressive and environmentally advanced at the time they were installed in the 1970s. The pavers were intended to be a pervious surface that made "wise use" of Druid Hill Park's beautiful parkland to act as drainage. Over the years, it has become an impervious surface with rainwater just running off the parking lots. A heavy rain and tree roots can cause the stormwater drainage pipes to move and collapse. Due to potholes and ruts, automobiles have sometimes been damaged from being driven on the lots and the surface has become dangerous upon which to walk or push a stroller or wheelchair. This first installment of \$1,000,000 of a multi-year request for funding-for removal of the current surface and creating necessary stormwater management through proper grading, curbing, and rain gardens on the parking lots-will be used for design.

Waterfowl Pavilion area is one of our rental facilities. It is also the site of our most important annual fundraiser, Brew at the Zoo. It is used well and used often. Rain and erosion have taken a toll. Trees are in jeopardy from vendor trucks parking and compacting soil on the roots. As a result, the grounds need regrading and some trees must be removed. The pavilion is close to 90 years old and needs a new floor, upgraded exterior lighting, new hose bibs and water fountains. Due to the fact that its stormwater management may be the same as for Parking Lots A and B, this project should be done at the same time as the lots. This is the first of a three-year request.

The Polar Bear Tram Stop shade structure will provide a permanent shade shelter for guests awaiting the tram to exit the Zoo as well as create a new, safer curb cut on which guests will enter and exit the tram. The current temporary shade structure has frequently blown over when winds are somewhat high and does not sufficiently shade those under it. As there may be a 15-20 minute wait for a tram, guests may be in the sun for an uncomfortable amount of time. Additionally, the angle of the curb cut is difficult for guests to navigate by foot, by stroller, or by wheelchair. This year's \$100,000 for this project is the first of a two-year request and will be used for design and engineering costs.

The Zoo's purposes are two-fold: conservation and education. The Zoo saves animals from extinction. Its business is quite literally about life and death. Approximately 95% of this living collection is of conservation concern (in Maryland, nationally, and/or internationally) and the species need the care and protection that the Zoo provides. Participating in the breeding and care of endangered and threatened animals is the most important part of the work that we do. All zoos that are part of the AZA are focused on the Species Survival Plan (SSP), a program designed to protect specific threatened and endangered species found on all continents of the world. These capital projects highlight the critical role the State plays in

maintaining both the living collection and the infrastructure that are the core assets of the Zoo.

Saving animals from extinction is a valuable contribution to the high quality of life we enjoy in Maryland. The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is the preeminent zoo in the State of Maryland with a long history of providing young and old the opportunity to see, smell, and touch animals from several continents. These experiences are not replicable in any other way for those who do not have the ability to travel to other countries and are valuable even to those with that capability. The Fiscal Year 2020 capital items are not as exciting as those of the previous years with the dramatic changes made to the habitats of iconic species. They are, however, equally important in their contribution to the well-being of the animals in our care, be that because of direct impact to the animals' environment or because of indirect impact for sites on grounds that provide earned revenue.

The Maryland Zoological Society and the staff of The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore are extremely grateful to the State for its capital project funding and to this Subcommittee for its long standing support. **We respectfully request approval of full funding for The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore.**

# MARYLAND ZOO

Example of Tree Falling Due to Rain



# MARYLAND ZOO

## Waterfowl Pavilion Rain Damage and Erosion



# MARYLAND ZOO

Elephant House Exterior



# MARYLAND ZOO

Leaks and Mold Due to Rain

Chimpanzee House



Elephant House

