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**EXPANSION PLANS FOR MARYLAND ZOO ELEPHANT EXHIBIT DELAYED**

**BALTIMORE (March 20, 2007)** - The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore today announced it will delay a planned expansion of its elephant exhibit. As a result, three elephants scheduled to move here from the Philadelphia Zoo will be going elsewhere, the two zoos jointly announced today.

“It’s really a question of the timing of our exhibit,” said Billie Grieb, president and CEO of The Maryland Zoo. “Unfortunately, as is often the case with construction projects, our timetable has slipped. At the same time, we did not feel it was fair to ask the Philadelphia Zoo to delay their own plans. This decision, as difficult as it was, also will give us the opportunity to focus our attention even further on some of the recent financial challenges that we have been working to resolve.”

The Philadelphia Zoo is working closely with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums to find a new home for the three African elephants, named Petal, Kallie and Bette.

“We are disappointed with The Maryland Zoo’s decision. As originally planned, the expansion would have provided a new home to our three African elephants,” said Vikram Dewan, president and CEO of the Philadelphia Zoo.

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“After carefully studying possible sites to house and care for these elephants—including two of breeding-age—we believed Maryland was an ideal location. However, it was not our only excellent option. Once notified by Maryland Zoo officials that their plans were changing, we immediately began re-examining alternative sites, including those that were originally evaluated by our animal care staff.”

“While The Maryland Zoo’s circumstances – including timing - have unfortunately changed, our requirements for an excellent, long-term home for our elephants, have not changed. As in the past, we continue to work with our colleagues in the AZA to evaluate all options for Petal, Kallie and Bette. The health, safety, and welfare of the elephants were and remain the most important factors in selecting a new home for them,” Dewan said.

The Maryland Zoo is already home to two African elephants, Dolly and Anna, who will remain here. The Zoo still intends to expand its elephant exhibit at some point in the future, and hopes to increase its herd size within the next several years.

“With all the efforts being made in North American zoos to breed African elephants, we are hopeful that we will be able to add elephants over time,” said Karl Kranz, The Maryland Zoo’s General Curator and Chief Operating Officer. “In the meantime, we will continue to provide excellent care to Dolly and Anna. We will also continue attempts to artificially inseminate Dolly in the hopes of producing a calf. With the threats that elephants face in the wild, they need as much help from humans as possible to survive.”

The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is home to more than 1,500 birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles, representing nearly 200 species. The Zoo is a leader in wildlife conservation and education, and is the headquarters of the Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project, which provides health care to the highly endangered mountain gorillas in the countries of Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

#### **About The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore**

Founded in 1876, The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is the third oldest zoo in the United States and is internationally known for its contributions in conservation and research. More than 1,500 animals are represented in the Zoo’s varied natural habitat exhibits in areas such as Polar Bear Watch, the Maryland Wilderness, African Journey and the award-winning Children’s Zoo. Situated in Druid Hill Park near downtown Baltimore, the Zoo is fully accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. For more information, visit [www.marylandzoo.org](http://www.marylandzoo.org).

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