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SPEAKER MILLER AND BROOKLYN DELEGATION FIGHT TO KEEP NYC ZOOS OPEN FOR BUSINESS *Prospect Park and Queens Zoos Threatened by Budget Cuts*

Prospect Park Zoo – Speaker Gifford Miller was joined by the City Council’s Brooklyn delegation today at the Prospect Park Zoo to speak out in defense of New York City’s zoos.

Under proposals put forward by the administration, both the Prospect Park Zoo and the Queens Zoo, located in Flushing Meadows, would have to be closed due to budget cuts. This would mean the loss of 124 jobs at the two zoos, which draw about 500,000 visitors each year.

The City has invested more than \$120 million since 1992 to revamp the Prospect Park and the Queens zoos. Although administration officials estimate that less than \$6 million will be saved with the closings, the Wildlife Conservation Society, which operates the Prospect Park, Queens, Bronx, and Central Park zoos, says that the cost of closing their facilities and finding new homes for the animals could be as high as \$8 million.

Speaker Miller noted alternative savings proposals that have been developed by the Council to offset the cost of keeping the zoos open. One such proposal for greater energy efficiency could net the City \$65 million in savings.

“The closing of the zoos should not happen and it does not have to happen,” Speaker Miller said. “Closing the Prospect Park and Queens zoos will harm the communities for which they provide an essential economic anchor and it will make it more difficult for New Yorkers who are already trying to get by in a difficult economy.”

Since the closings of the Prospect Park and Queens zoos was proposed in April, the Wildlife Conservation Society has been leading a petitioning drive to demonstrate public opposition to budget cuts on city zoos. To date, they have accumulated about 150,000 signatures.

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