

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**STATEMENT FROM THE COLUMBUS ZOO AND AQUARIUM REGARDING THE  
DOCUMENTARY, *THE CONSERVATION GAME***

A new documentary, *The Conservation Game*, looks at the use of exotic animals, particularly big cat cubs, in television entertainment. The film's main call to action is for tighter restrictions on the breeding, ownership, and use of exotic big cats in the U.S. Among those featured in the film are the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, former Emeritus Director Jack Hanna, and some former and current staff.

The film advocates for the passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act now being considered in Congress. The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium shares and applauds this goal. The Columbus Zoo joins our community's accrediting organization, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), and other institutions that advocate for regulations that protect animals and the public. The Columbus Zoo joined directors of Ohio's five largest zoos requesting Ohio Senator Rob Portman co-sponsor the bill. Senator Portman agreed to be a co-sponsor last week. This is a big win for the AZA community and the safety and welfare of big cats.

The Columbus Zoo team has made some substantive changes in organization structure and policies since Jerry Borin became interim CEO on March 30. Based on some issues raised in *The Conservation Game*, the Zoo's new leadership has made changes, including ending all relationships with animal organizations mentioned in the film, championing passage of the Big Cat Safety Act, and no longer allowing any cats or primates off grounds for programming.

The Zoo's proactive actions and changes in the past several months have rendered nearly all the points raised in the documentary moot.

The current leadership and the team at the Columbus Zoo are committed to upholding the absolute highest standards of animal care and animal welfare both at our Zoo and in the world at large. Zoo policies have been and will continue to be improved to ensure animal welfare. We continually review our internal practices and policies. Any action that may risk animal or human safety is, and shall be, strictly prohibited.

As always, the Zoo team is committed to doing what is right for the welfare of animals and the conservation of wildlife.

For more information, please contact Nicolle Gómez Racey, VP of Communication and Marketing, (direct line) 614-645-3411 or [nicolle.racey@columbuszoo.org](mailto:nicolle.racey@columbuszoo.org).

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