



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **ZOO MUST FIND HARVEY THE HIPPO A NEW HOME**

The Greater Vancouver Zoo should transfer Harvey the hippopotamus out of the zoo to a better facility say animal protection watchdogs, Zoocheck Canada and the Vancouver Humane Society (VHS).

They say the zoo has failed to even start long-promised improvements to its own hippo enclosure, where Harvey's mate, Gertrude, died earlier this month. Zoo officials said they would have a new barn ready by this October, after complaints last winter about the two hippos being kept in freezing temperatures in an unheated barn. Yet little work has taken place on the site.

Peter Fricker, a spokesperson for VHS, said Harvey should be moved out to a new facility, as the zoo was not serious about making improvements. "It's Tina the elephant all over again," said Fricker. "The zoo publicly promised to improve her enclosure but she languished in poor conditions for 30 years." He said Harvey and Gertrude lived 20 years in the same enclosure and Gertrude didn't live to see any improvements.

"The Greater Vancouver Zoo has been promising improved environments for animals for decades. At least three hippos have already died under their care. How many more animals need to suffer and die before they change their ways," said Julie Woodyer, Campaigns Director for Zoocheck Canada. "Simply adding a heated barn for Harvey is not enough. Hippos are a complex species with complex biological and behavioural needs. It does not make sense to spend in excess of a quarter of a million dollars to provide, what is in essence, a band-aid solution to a far more serious problem."

The VHS and Zoocheck Canada have long argued that a better use of funds would be to develop a sanctuary for native wildlife that would have a rehabilitation and release component.\* They say this type of facility would not only provide an educational centre for the public about species native to BC, but would provide a service for wildlife in a climate and environment that is appropriate for those species.

\*See VHS/Zoocheck report titled 'Broken Promises?' at [www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca](http://www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca) or [www.zoocheck.com](http://www.zoocheck.com)

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