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VANCOUVER PARKS BOARD DECISION REFLECTS PUBLIC SENTIMENT

Vancouver, B.C. – The Vancouver Aquarium is pleased with the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation’s decision to deny the plebiscite motion, which reflects the sentiment of the community.

The community has already spoken on this issue loudly and clearly during the extensive public consultation on both the Aquarium’s expansion and the guidelines under which the Aquarium can acquire and keep cetaceans, said Vancouver Aquarium President Dr. John Nightingale.

We’re pleased with the Parks Board decision, which enables us to continue to focus on our conservation, education and research efforts.

In 2006, at the request of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, the Aquarium contracted with a leading B.C. public consultation firm to design and manage a comprehensive community consultation on a proposed expansion and revitalization. The consultation also included five questions seeking feedback on rules governing whales and dolphins in Stanley Park.

Consultation input was independently verified and analyzed by an internationally-recognized market research firm. Consultation outcomes demonstrated the following:

Strong public support for acquiring whales and dolphins under each of the five rules

Strong public support for aquarium expansion which includes new habitats (homes) for cetaceans

The majority of people in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland support the Aquarium having whales and dolphins in Stanley Park, added Dr. Nightingale. Residents also strongly support the Aquarium’s commitment to not capturing cetaceans from the wild, which we proudly proclaimed in 1996, making Vancouver Aquarium the only aquarium in the world to publicly make this commitment.

Vancouver Aquarium stands by the open and inclusive process by which the people of Vancouver have voiced their opinions the comprehensive community consultation conducted in 2006 provided a broad measure of public opinion across all segments of the community. The Aquarium continues with its planning and fundraising efforts for its revitalized and expanded facilities, which were approved in 2006.

An overview of the 2006 Vancouver Aquarium community consultation is available at www.vanaqua.org/pressroom/ConsultationResults.html.

About Vancouver Aquarium

The Vancouver Aquarium is a global leader in connecting people to our natural world, and a self-supporting, non-profit association dedicated to effecting the conservation of aquatic life through display and interpretation, education, research, and direct action. Learn more at www.vanaqua.org.

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