

PRESS RELEASE

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Woodland Park Zoo elephants continue to do well at San Diego Zoo

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo's female Asian elephants, Bamboo and Chai, continue to do well at San Diego Zoo.

The elephants were headed to their new home at Oklahoma City Zoo when a severe change in a forecasted storm rerouted the caravan to the south. A conservative decision was made in Las Vegas for animal welfare precautions to go to San Diego Zoo and allow the elephants to rest because the reroute would have extended the trip a day longer. Unfortunately, activists have made unfounded allegations about the elephants, their care and their health. The misinformation is misleading and wrong.



Keepers from Woodland Park Zoo are at San Diego Zoo providing direct care to Bamboo, 48, and Chai, 36. "Their activity levels are normal and both continue to eat heartily, sleep and interact with their keepers," said Dr. Kelly Helmick, associate veterinarian at Woodland Park Zoo, "and we are pleased to report that they continue to do well," said Helmick.

Extensive planning went into ensuring a safe transport for the elephants, as it does for all the zoo's animals, and the transport consultant has specialized in moving elephants for nearly three decades. On April 15, Bamboo and Chai left Woodland Park Zoo on a custom-built elephant transport vehicle for their new home at Oklahoma City Zoo. The weather forecast was a possible minor disturbance for the mid-west region later in the week, more to the south. It was during a late afternoon stop in Ogden, Utah on April 16 when the team learned the storm had been updated to increased severity and to cover a much larger area more to the north. The decision was made to reroute south to Las Vegas then Kingman, Ariz. and take I-40.

Round-the-clock monitoring via live-feed cameras enabled the animal care and veterinary staff to monitor the elephants, as well as stops every few hours to provide food and change water. Stops became more frequent to check on the welfare of the elephants, which slowed down the travel time. In Las Vegas, the team assessed the elephants were getting tired. "As a precaution, we concluded we did not want to keep them on the road an additional day and decided to take a break from the journey and give the elephants a chance to rest and stretch their legs. Despite inaccurate claims by activist campaigns, Bamboo did not have colic," affirmed Helmick, who was one of two veterinarians among the support staff traveling with the caravan and is closely familiar with Bamboo.

A decision was made to change course and head to San Diego Zoo who was prepared with the appropriate equipment to unload Bamboo and Chai, immediate room, and expert elephant and veterinary staff.

Both elephants bathed, ate, drank, and interacted with their keepers throughout the journey and they walked off the crates on their own at San Diego Zoo without any concerns. "Bamboo and Chai quickly resumed a normal routine, eating, drinking, and resting inside San Diego Zoo's facility," added Helmick.

Woodland Park Zoo still plans on moving forward with its plans to relocate Bamboo and Chai to Oklahoma City Zoo where they can join a family with a larger, multi-generational herd. "We are in the process of evaluating a timeline for resuming the trip while keeping the health and welfare of Bamboo and Chai our top priority," said Dr. Deborah Jensen, Woodland Park Zoo President and CEO. "The diverted route to San Diego Zoo was unexpected. There are many logistics to coordinate such as staffing and transportation, and we want our elephants to be

fully rested. We continue to be grateful to San Diego Zoo for accommodating our elephants and providing expert staff support.”

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