

December 15 2010

The Honourable Stephen Mandel  
Mayor of Edmonton

Dear Mayor Mandel:

I'm writing with a proposal that could benefit the great city of Edmonton and also end one of its recent battles. Edmonton's Valley Zoo has ignored pleas to retire Lucy—its suffering solitary elephant—to a sanctuary in a warmer climate, where she would be in the company of other elephants and be given some relief from her arthritis and other ailments. In exchange for Lucy's immediate release, I would like to offer \$100,000 toward any one of the several city projects—such as the new downtown arena or upgrades to the Edmonton Indy racetrack—that need funding.

Hopefully, all the plans to revitalize downtown Edmonton will draw even more entertainment events to the area. However, the zoo's expensive, out-of-date elephant exhibit only stands in the way of progress. Because zoos can't begin to fulfill the social and physical needs of these highly intelligent animals, even zoos in far warmer areas have started to phase out their elephant exhibits. Lucy's serious health problems and the signs of mental distress that she has long exhibited are reasons enough to send her to a sanctuary in a warmer climate, but I hope that my proposal creates even more incentive. Not only would letting Lucy go generate positive publicity, it would also end a costly and embarrassing lawsuit and help the city fund a worthwhile project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Georges Laraque', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Georges Laraque