2026 Capital Investment Request

MINNESOTA ZOO

Why the Minnesota Zoo Matters to Minnesota

- **Economic engine:** $320M annual impact
- **Minnesota's top year-round gated attraction:** 1.4M visitors statewide
- **Unique state agency:** Only 36% state-funded
- **Education & access:** 83K students from 1,000 schools, Free to Explore program, and reach to all 87 counties
- **State reputation:** AZA-accredited, nationally recognized for Conservation and Education programs

This is a major state asset that largely pays for itself - but its infrastructure does not.

Decades of Deferred Maintenance Now Create Safety and Operational Risk

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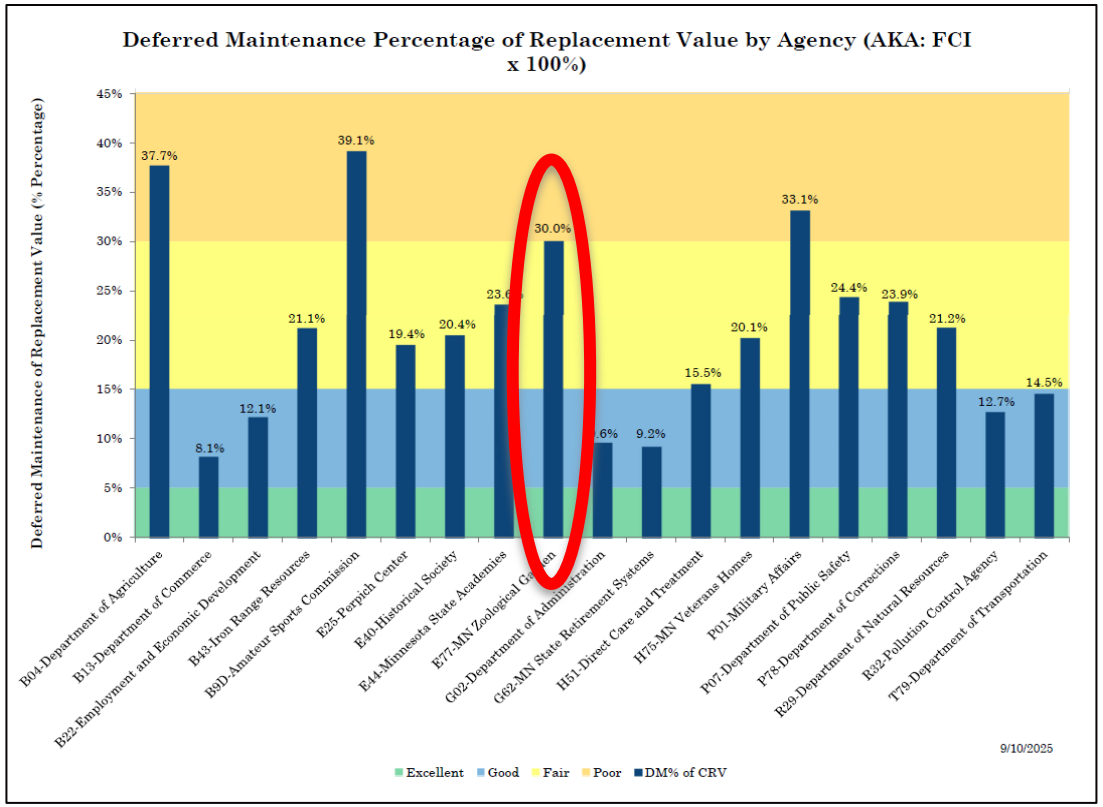
- Among the worst facility condition ratings of all state agencies
- 1/3 of 125 structures in poor or crisis condition
- $78M facilities backlog that continues to grow (not including grounds)
- Elevated risk to visitors, staff, and animals

At this stage, the risk is not whether something will fail - it's whether we fix it in a planned way or through emergency spending.



The Department of Administration's ratio of Deferred Maintenance to Current Replacement Value

Human & Animal Safety Risk

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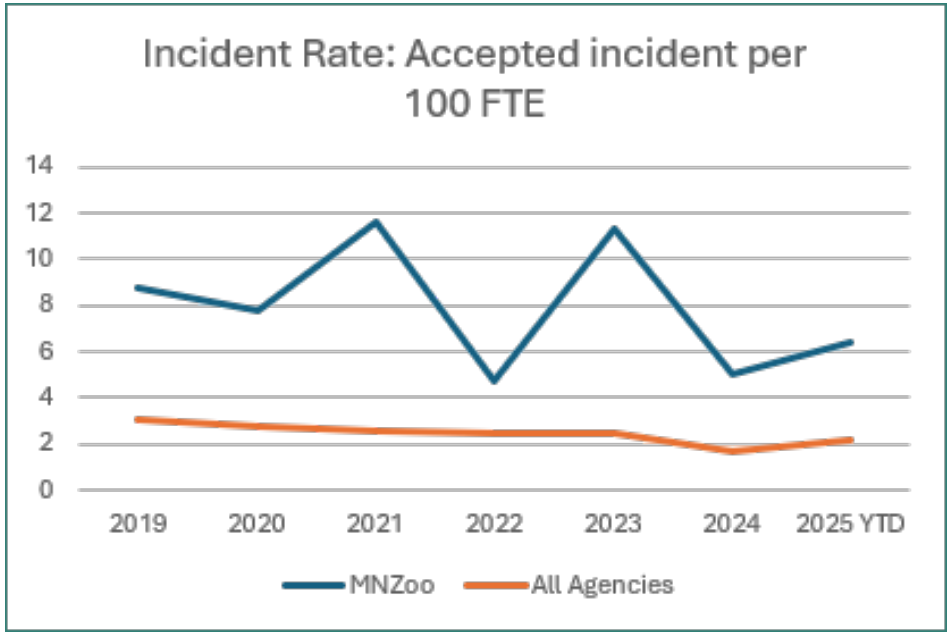
The Zoo has the **worst incident rate of all state agencies** according to MnSAFE FY26 Q1 results.



Zoo incident rates compared to all state agencies 2019 - 2025

58% increase in incidents among staff performing animal care work since 2017

65 total incidents among staff performing animal care & animal health work in the last 12 months

Staff incidents = USDA/OSHA/AZA regulation risk

Governor’s Recommendation: $4,000,000

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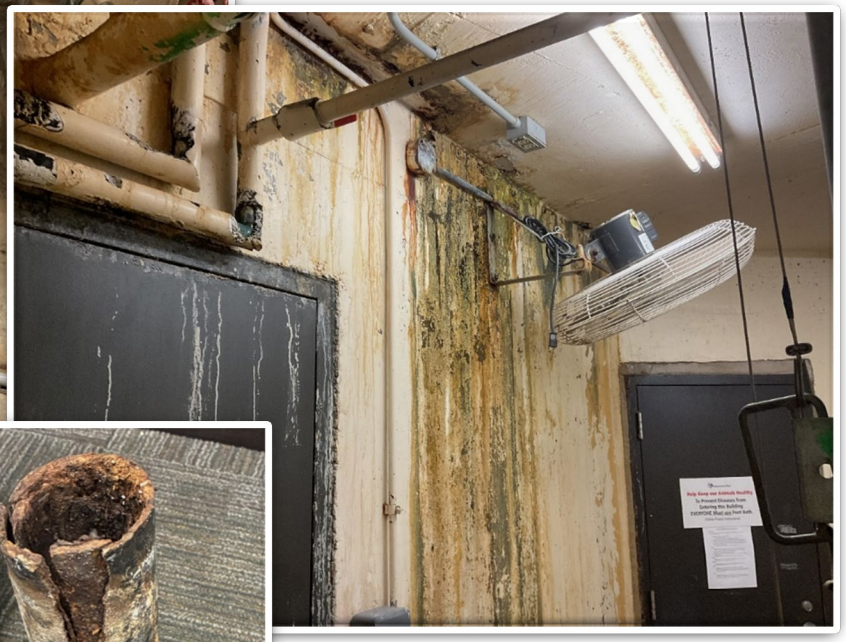
- The Governor’s bonding recommendation for the Zoo includes $4M, which we deeply appreciate
- Those dollars will go to the highest-risk systems:
  - Utilities
  - Life support
  - Roofs
  - And emergency issues that cannot wait

Failing life support systems

Animal holding violations



Section of pipe that burst recently

Emergency Renovation: $6,000,000

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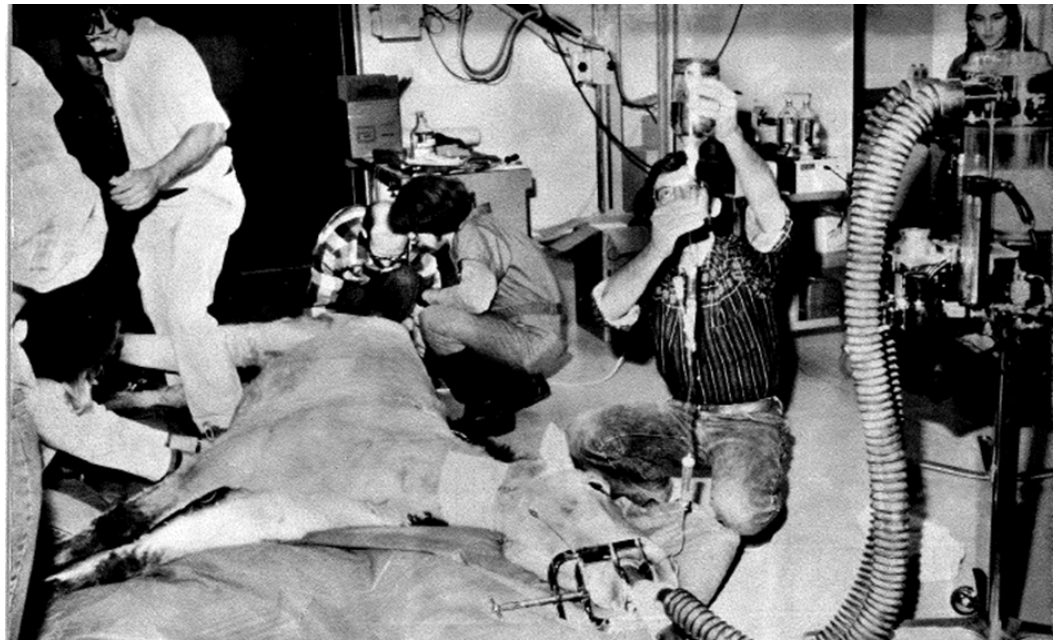
- The Zoo's top priority is building a modern, fully functional Animal Hospital
- Thanks to $11M in state support last year, and over $12M in private contributions, we've made significant progress
- But the project is still $6M short for a complete facility



The current facility was built in 1975 and lacks essential infrastructure to meet USDA and modern veterinary standards, posing risks to both animals and humans.

Emergency Renovation: $6,000,000

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- Because of the urgent need for a new hospital, we are building the new facility on a smaller footprint, attached to the existing Animal Hospital in A-Building
- This new hospital will accommodate the essential medical functions but does not include space for staff offices, storage, or administrative functions
- A-Building, the oldest building on campus, must be renovated to support these critical hospital staffing needs

Deteriorating animal holding spaces in A-Building make it impossible to properly house animals for treatment.

Emergency Renovation: $6,000,000

- **$6M in asset preservation is urgently needed to fund renovation** of A-Building's envelope, systems, and workspaces to remove asbestos, meet code requirements, and serve the Zoo's needs going forward

- Without this renovation, the state's investment in the new Animal Hospital cannot operate as intended, and the Zoo cannot provide the level of care our animals require

Completing A-Building is not optional—it's essential to ensuring that the new Animal Hospital fulfills its purpose for animal care, staff operations, and the safety of all on campus.

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Governor's Recommendation: $4,000,000

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Emergency Renovation: $6,000,000

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Total Investment: $10,000,000

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Questions?

The Minnesota Zoo is a beloved statewide asset that serves over 1 million visitors and reflects Minnesota's values.

This investment is about protecting that asset and avoiding much higher costs in the future.