



Senator Sandra L. Pappas

Chair, Senate Capital Investment Committee

Members of the Senate Capital Investment Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Zoo, I want to sincerely thank you for including the Zoo in SF 5005, specifically Section 12, which provides \$4 million for critical infrastructure needs that are essential to safe and reliable operations.

The Minnesota Zoo is facing decades of deferred maintenance that now present growing risks to the safety of our visitors, staff, and animals. Approximately one-third of our 125 buildings are in poor or crisis condition, and our deferred maintenance backlog has reached \$78 million. At this stage, the question is no longer whether if systems will fail, but when and whether we address these issues proactively or through costly emergency repairs that disrupt operations and increase risk.

The Governor's recommendation of \$4 million will allow us to address our most urgent needs, including failing HVAC and life-support systems, deteriorating roofs and structural elements, and critical code and safety compliance issues. These investments are essential to maintaining safe operations and protecting the state's prior capital investments.

Additionally, if further asset preservation funding becomes available, the Zoo would prioritize renovation of A-Building, the campus's oldest structure and current Animal Hospital. With \$11 million in prior state support and over \$12 million in private contributions, significant progress has been made toward building a new Animal Hospital, but \$6 million is still needed to complete the project.

The Minnesota Zoo serves 1.4 million visitors annually and is a valued statewide asset. This request is not about expansion, it is about maintaining what the State of Minnesota has already built, reducing long-term costs, and ensuring the Zoo can continue to operate safely and effectively for years to come.

We are grateful for your consideration and for the Committee's continued support of critical state infrastructure.

Sincerely,

John Frawley
Director
Minnesota Zoo