



## Cetaceans at the Vancouver Aquarium

*Excerpted from Minutes 2017-01-23*

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MOVED by Commissioner Kirby-Yung  
SECONDED by Commissioner Mackinnon

### WHEREAS:

1. The Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre has operated in Stanley Park since 1956 through a lease agreement with the Vancouver Park Board.
2. The Vancouver Aquarium is a popular visitor facility in Stanley Park for residents and visitors alike, receiving more than 1.1 million visitors annually.
3. The Vancouver Aquarium has played a significant role in fostering understanding and appreciation for marine life and our oceans, as well as in research and conservation initiatives such as the OceanWise Sustainable Seafood Program, marine mammal rehabilitation, BC Cetaceans Sighting Network, Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, stellar sea lion research, and more.
4. The Vancouver Aquarium was the first in the world to capture and display an orca. Other whales and dolphins on display have included belugas, narwhals and dolphins.
5. In 1996, the Vancouver Park Board instituted a municipal bylaw that prevents the Vancouver Aquarium from capturing cetaceans from the wild for display purposes, and only allows it to obtain cetaceans from other facilities if they were born in captivity, captured before 1996, or were rescued and deemed un-releasable after this date.
6. In 2001, the Aquarium ceased having orca or killer whales after the death of Finna, and a subsequent inability to find companionship for the remaining orca Bjossa.
7. In August 2014, the Vancouver Park Board announced that it intended to enact a by-law to ban breeding of cetaceans at the Vancouver Aquarium, and tasked staff with drafting an amendment to the existing by-law regulating cetaceans at the Aquarium. However in late 2014, a majority of Park Board commissioners voted against enacting an amendment to the by-law.
8. A bill to end the captivity of cetaceans such as whales and dolphins in Canada was tabled in July 2015 in the Senate. Bill S-203 just passed its second reading in November.
9. In November 2016, the remaining two belugas at Vancouver Aquarium passed away: Aurora died November 25, nine days after her calf Qila.



THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Vancouver Park Board:

- A. Support inclusion of an assent question on the 2018 Municipal Election ballot to determine if Vancouver residents support keeping cetaceans at the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre;
- B. Request the City of Vancouver to add such an assent (plebiscite) question to the 2018 Municipal Election ballot per section 130 of the Vancouver Charter; and
- C. Write to the Vancouver Aquarium asking it consider not bringing cetaceans into the facility until after the results of the 2018 plebiscite are received.

REFERRED

(Commissioners Coupar/Crawford/Kirby-Yung opposed)