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**The Honorable City Council of Edmonton,**

I have been following with concern the debate regarding Lucy, the lone female Asian elephant, housed at the Edmonton Valley Zoo. Lucy was captured in Sri Lanka in 1976; her records list her original name as Skanik and her birth year as 1975. By mid 1977, at an age when she should have been in the jungles of Sri Lanka, suckling from her mother, Lucy was living behind bars at the Edmonton Valley Zoo. There, in the icy cold of central Canada, she spent the next 12 years, alone, rather than living with her family, being cared for and nurtured by mother and allomothers and learning through social interactions and experiences.

In 1989, when Lucy was 14, an African elephant calf, Samantha, torn from her own family through a culling operation in Zimbabwe, was brought to the zoo. Other than a couple of occasions when Lucy was sent on (failed) breeding loans, Samantha was Lucy's only elephant companion. In 2007 Samantha was moved to North Carolina on an extended breeding loan, leaving Lucy on her own once more. Highly social, complex and intelligent, no elephant should have to live alone.

Lucy's home at the zoo is an outdoor yard of less than half an acre and a tiny indoor enclosure with a concrete floor. Due to the icy temperatures and inclement weather, Lucy is estimated to spend up to three quarters of her time indoors – on the concrete floor. At age 34 Lucy is still a young elephant, yet her health problems are myriad and are directly caused by the cold, sedentary life she has been forced to live.

I have studied elephants and worked for their conservation and welfare since the year that Lucy was born; I am considered a world expert in the field of elephant behavior and communication. It is my considered opinion that the Edmonton Valley Zoo must, with all urgency, allow Lucy to live out the remainder of her life in a warmer climate in a setting where she is free to roam outdoors and to interact with members of her own species. Only in this situation does Lucy have the chance to make a recovery. After 32 years of captive misery, Lucy deserves to be given what is in her best interests. I urge the Edmonton Valley Zoo to put her needs first, and send Lucy to California, to PAWS, where she has been offered such a home.

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