



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **THE MARYLAND ZOO TO BECOME A SMOKE-FREE FACILITY**

**BALTIMORE, MD** – The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore will become a smoke-free facility as of July 1, 2014. The new policy bans the use of all tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, as well as alternative smoking products or other smoking devices including e-cigarettes, on Zoo grounds. Smoking already was prohibited inside Zoo buildings by virtue of the Clean Indoor Air Act of Maryland.

"Providing a quality experience for our visitors is a priority for the Zoo, and exposure to second hand smoke has recently been the number one complaint," said Don Hutchinson, president and CEO of the Zoo. "Given the public smoking bans in public areas and workplaces, we have decided to establish and maintain a smoke-free environment here at the Zoo."

If visitors want to smoke, they will have the option to leave the Zoo grounds to do so, with re-entry permitted. Any visitors who are seen smoking will be approached by a member of staff and asked to extinguish their smoking product or, if they wish to continue smoking, to move to an area outside the Zoo. There will be a designated smoking area outside of the Main Gate to the right of the entrance.

Over 2/3rds of all zoos and aquariums accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) are smoke-free. "Families visiting The Maryland Zoo are engaging in nature-focused, educational and fun experiences," continued Hutchinson. "It is our hope that these experiences will be improved by this new smoke-free policy as we continue to work towards enhanced environments for both visitors and animals alike."

### **About The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore**

Founded in 1876, The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is the third oldest zoo in the United States and is internationally known for its contributions in conservation and research. More than 1,500 animals are represented in the Zoo's varied natural habitat exhibits in areas such as Polar Bear Watch, the Maryland Wilderness, African Journey and the award-winning Children's Zoo. Situated in Druid Hill Park near downtown Baltimore, the Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. For more information, visit [www.marylandzoo.org](http://www.marylandzoo.org).

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