



Potential Negative Impact of Pending Jobs Legislation on Zoos and Aquariums

Zoos and aquariums are as much a part of Main Street as any of America's public institutions. Yet, arbitrary language contained in the House-passed *Jobs for Main Street Act* (H.R. 2847) prevents accredited zoos and aquariums from accessing needed funds for job creation. H.R. 2847 states:

"Sec. 1702. All funds provided under this title shall be subject to the requirements of section 1604 of division A of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5)."

The original harmful language was included in the original American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Section 1604 of the ARRA states:

"None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this Act may be used by any State or local government, or any private entity, for any casino or other gambling establishment, aquarium, zoo, golf course, or swimming pool."

It is unfair that public zoos and aquariums continue to be punished, especially when jobs are at stake. Please keep zoos and aquariums eligible for Federal funding as a matter of basic fairness.

The original ARRA language has already adversely impacted public zoos and aquariums nationwide, especially during this period of severe economic stress. Many zoos and aquariums have had to lay off employees and decrease the services provided to local communities.

States and localities should be able to spend Federal dollars on valuable projects that save and create new jobs in their communities. Zoo and aquarium science/education/conservation programming and infrastructure projects can meet the test of accountability and public benefit, if allowed to compete on a level playing field for these funds.

The prohibition on public zoos and aquariums has and would continue to unfairly deny communities the proven and effective job creation that zoos and aquariums can offer. Examples of potential missed opportunities include:

- City infrastructure, including water/sewer systems and broadband telecommunications;
- Green building projects, including energy efficiency retrofits and construction;
- Endangered species recovery plans in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- National Science Foundation and other direct Federal scientific research grants; and
- Environmental education, after school, and at-risk youth employment/training programs.

As a matter of basic fairness, please support the ability of zoos and aquariums to compete for funds and to create jobs for American workers.