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Groups call for boycott of aquarium consultation

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Genuine Health

Several animal-welfare groups have issued a news release asking the public not to participate in a Vancouver aquarium public-consultation process.

The Vancouver aquarium has hired Kirk & Co. to evaluate the public's appetite for increasing the size of the facility. No Whales in Captivity, Lifeforce Foundation, Vancouver Humane Society, and Whalefriends say the only way to deal with the aquarium's expansion plan is through a referendum.

The previous COPE-controlled park board passed a motion for a plebiscite in the 2008 municipal election on keeping whales and dolphins in captivity in Stanley Park, where the aquarium is situated.

A previous NPA-controlled park board in the mid-1990s had passed a motion requiring a referendum before the aquarium could expand.

Last May, however, NPA Comm. Marty Zlotnik introduced motions to cancel the requirements for a referendum on expansion and a plebiscite on keeping cetaceans in captivity. Both motions passed.

The Vancouver aquarium has announced a plan to increase its footprint in Stanley Park by 0.6 hectares. This would boost the facility's size by 50 percent, and create room for larger pools for beluga whales, sea otters, sea lions, and dolphins.

The aquarium's proposal would require the removal of 15 conifers and 17 deciduous trees, and no trees with a diameter greater than 60 centimetres.