



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO

Department of Natural and Environmental Resources

December 28, 2018

Mrs. Carol Buckley
President
Elephant Aid International
PO Box 283
Attapulgis, Georgia 39815

Dear Mrs. Buckley:

On August 2, 2018 the Governor of Puerto Rico, Honorable Dr. Ricardo Rosselló-Nevarés, signed Act No. 171-2018, to implement the Reorganization Plan of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DRNA in spanish) of 2018. With the enactment of Act 171, supra, the powers and functions that corresponded to the Secretary of the Sports and Recreation Department (DRD in spanish) regarding the National Parks Program were transferred to the Secretary of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, including the *Parque Nacional Zoológico de Puerto Rico Dr. Juan A. Rivero*, better known as the Mayagüez Zoo.

During the transition process established by the Act, which have not concluded, the DRNA became aware of the contract signed between the DRD and the Elephant Aid International (EAI) on May 23, 2018, which purpose was to donate the elephant name Mundi, a property of the Government of Puerto Rico, to the EAI.

As you may be aware, last week the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) – following a Freedom of Information Act request– published a devastating report on the Zoo. The report indicates that animals were abused at the zoo and the living conditions for the animals are substandard. This has raised a series of concerns among all sectors in Puerto Rico, as well as the Governor and First Lady, and revived the debate regarding the health, future and relocation of Mundi.

The protection and welfare of animals is a fundamental part of the public policy implemented by the Governor of Puerto Rico and by me as Secretary of the DRNA. As per the last conversation between EAI, DRD (Chief Legal Counsel, Ingrid Caro) and the DRNA (Deputy Secretary, Armando Otero), since the facilities of the sanctuary are still under construction, it will take too long, maybe years, until the transfer of Mundi can be completed. Taking this into consideration, and due to the imperative need to protect the elephant, the relocation to a better and more proper facility is the priority of our administration.



According to the aforementioned, and for the safety and wellbeing of Mundi, we need to relocate the animal with the outmost urgency. Taking into account that the EAI sanctuary is not ready to receive Mundi in the upcoming weeks or on a medium frame time, we regret to inform you that we are terminating the contract, effective immediately, for the best interest of Mundi.

Sincerely,



Tania Vázquez-Rivera
Secretary