

January 15, 2024

Representative Richard Heath
Chairman, House Agriculture Committee
700 Capital Avenue
Frankfort, KY 40601

Senator Jason Howell
Chairman, Senate Agriculture Committee
700 Capital Avenue
Frankfort, KY 40601

cc: Representative Michael Sarge Pollock
700 Capital Avenue
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Chairman Heath and Chairman Howell,

On behalf of the Louisville Zoological Gardens, we would like to formally endorse the Murray State University School of Veterinary Medicine proposal.

We are troubled about the large animal veterinarian shortage across our state. It is concerning that in Kentucky, there are only 54 veterinarians dedicated to full-time care of large animals, with an approximate shortage of 5,000 veterinarians nationally to meet this demand. We anticipate our own need for large animal veterinarians at the Louisville Zoological Gardens will only continue to increase and it is alarming that so few individuals are going into this practice.

One solution to this growing problem is for more students to go into the practice of veterinary medicine and remain in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Since our state still does not have a School of Veterinary Medicine, establishing one at Murray State University and having programs and initiatives to recruit and retain large animal veterinarians within our own state will help solve this issue.

Additionally, we have a positive working relationship with Murray State University. The Louisville Zoological Gardens partnered with Murray State University to install an antenna/sensor at Murray State University's Hancock Biological Station at Kentucky Lake in order to track bird migration. We are already receiving important data through this sensor regarding unique species of birds that we are tracking.

Therefore, the Louisville Zoological Gardens fully supports Murray State University in their efforts to develop an accredited School of Veterinary Medicine to aid in the large animal veterinarian shortage and assist the animal agriculture economy of Kentucky. Once the School of Veterinary Medicine is established,



we look forward to partnering with them on various initiatives and agreements to benefit both the Louisville Zoological Gardens and Murray State University.

It is our hope that both the Kentucky House and Senate Agriculture Committees will take up this important proposal and that it will be funded during this 2024 Legislative Session.

Sincerely,



Dan Maloney
Director, Louisville Zoological Gardens



Zoltan Gyimesi, DVM
Head Veterinarian
Louisville Zoological Gardens