

September 1, 2026

Shedd Aquarium
1200 S DuSable Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60605

SeaWorld San Antonio
10500 SeaWorld Dr
San Antonio, TX 78251

SeaWorld San Diego
500 SeaWorld Dr
San Diego, CA 92109

Georgia Aquarium
225 Baker St, NW
Atlanta, GA 30313

Oceanogràfic de Valencia
Carrer d-Eduardo Primo Yúfera 1
46013 València, Spain

Via email

To Whom it May Concern,

Re: Request to not breed belugas and dolphins imported from Marineland of Canada

On behalf of Animal Justice, Canada's leading national animal law organization, I write to respectfully request that your respective facilities not use the whales or dolphins recently imported from the now-shuttered Marineland of Canada for breeding. As you know, conditions at Marineland have reportedly been deteriorating for years, and the facility has seen 19 beluga deaths since 2019 alone. We are grateful that you have agreed to care for these animals given that they cannot be released into the wild and Marineland has decided to move them off site at a time when there is no seaside sanctuary capable of taking them in.

We are calling on you to show that this effort truly was a "rescue" operation in the animals' best interests, and is not fortuitously utilized as a way to replenish your captive breeding stock. Please commit to not breeding these belugas and dolphins under any circumstances.

As you may know, Canada passed a law in 2019 to ban the keeping of whales and dolphins in captivity, making it a criminal offence to breed captive whales and dolphins. Our government's intent in passing this groundbreaking law, which enjoyed widespread public support, was clear: the whales and dolphins still held at Canadian aquariums would be the last generation to live a life of captivity.

Under Canada's new law, the best interests of the animals involved is the central governing consideration when the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans issues permits to export cetaceans under section 23.2(2) of the *Fisheries Act*. Although we appreciate that Marineland's threats to kill its remaining animals placed the Minister in a challenging position, we are disappointed by reports that suggest that export permits were issued for all 30 belugas and four dolphins at Marineland without any requirement that the receiving facilities commit to not breeding the animals. This failure is at odds with the spirit and intent of Canadian law. It risks leaving these sentient, highly intelligent animals to breed future generations of captive cetaceans in the United States and Spain.

Keeping whales and dolphins in captivity for entertainment is increasingly out of step with public values, including in the United States and Spain. Yet your facilities can play an important role in providing homes to captive whales and dolphins in need. Canada's Fisheries Minister previously issued export permits to send belugas from Marineland to Mystic Aquarium in Connecticut and Oceanogràfic Valencia only after assurances that the animals would not be bred. There is no valid reason why a similar no-breeding commitment cannot be made now in relation to the animals exported over the past several weeks.

You have an opportunity to demonstrate to the public that the rescue of these animals has taken place in good faith and to benefit these animals, not the financial bottomline of your aquariums. We recognize that since these animals are no longer in Canada, our laws do not apply to them. It is nonetheless important that Canadian laws designed to protect cetaceans be given as much effect as possible, and that this complex rescue mission not also be used as a pretext to breed future generations of captive whales and dolphins.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Kaitlyn Mitchell', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kaitlyn Mitchell
Director of Legal Advocacy, Animal Justice