

## **The Online Citizen**

27 June 2011

### **Resorts World Sentosa: Petition by 650,000 people to let dolphins go not received**

We reproduce here in full the letter by ACRES Executive Director Louis Ng to Resorts World Sentosa's CEO Tan Hee Teck, to directly address the questions raised in this letter, point by point and in detail.

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27 June 2011

Mr. Tan Hee Teck  
CEO  
Resorts World Sentosa (RWS)

Dear Mr. Tan,

We understand that it was mentioned in the media that you did not receive the letter from Ric O' Barry. To ensure that you receive this letter, we have sent it to email addresses listed on the RWS website and also to your RWS staff members. We ask that they help to forward this letter to you and ensure that you receive this.

We hope that you will directly address the questions raised in this letter, point by point and in detail. The 650,000 people who have signed the petition urging you to please let the dolphins go, need to understand your position on this important issue.

1. Does RWS sincerely and truly believe that to teach its visitors about dolphin protection, the best way is to capture and remove dolphins from their natural habitat, subject them to stressful transportation, let them watch two of their pod mates die, subject them to further stressful transportation, subject them to training and getting them used to humans, feed them a diet they are not used to, house them in an artificial environment and then keep them captive for the rest of their lives?
2. Is RWS aware of the letter from Mexican Senator Jorge Ordorica (Chairman, Committee of Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries), who was so dismayed at the plans of RWS that he wrote to Singapore's National Development Minister about it? Senator Jorge wrote that Mexico's international reputation was dented as a result of its importing 28 Solomon Islands dolphins in 2003. At least 12 of the dolphins have since died. "Mexico's experience with this single import led to our government imposing an outright ban on importation and exportation of live cetaceans for entertainment purposes and this ban is still in place," the Mexican Senator said. He urged Singapore to consider Mexico's experience and 'the disturbing mortality' of the animals when evaluating applications for the permits to import such dolphins.
3. Is RWS aware that United Parcel Service (UPS), whom you paid to transport the first shipment of RWS dolphins from the Solomon Islands to the Philippines, said it would stop moving this

kind of cargo, as the practice violated its environmental principles? If UPS can understand that this is wrong, shouldn't RWS be able to understand as well?

4. Is RWS aware that Chris Porter, who sold the wild-caught dolphins to RWS, called for RWS to "review its motivation for using these animals as a tourist draw"? Porter was concerned that "RWS is using the animals primarily to make money while telling the public that its aim is to educate the public on marine conservation".

5. Is RWS aware of the European Association for Aquatic Mammals Standards for Establishments Housing Bottlenose Dolphins? If RWS is aware of these guidelines, why did it not follow them?

6. Why did RWS house the dolphins in a rusty enclosure in Langkawi and deny this initially?

7. Was the dolphin enclosure in Langkawi really 20 metres by 20 metres as RWS stated? Does RWS realise that ACRES has photos of the enclosure during its construction?

8. Since RWS is using the United States as an example, is RWS aware that in the late 1980s, facilities in the United States implemented a voluntary moratorium on collection of bottlenose dolphins from the wild, and this remains in place? Why is RWS not following this progressive and voluntary decision?

9. If dolphins can thrive in facilities and have also been bred successfully in facilities, why then did RWS need to acquire wild-caught dolphins? Please note that the question here is not whether catching dolphins from the wild is legal and forgetting the moral issues involved, but specifically why did RWS not acquire captive-bred dolphins?

10. Does RWS realise that dolphins, like us, are sentient beings, and when considering whether to snatch them from the wild, it is not only about whether the dolphins are endangered, but more importantly whether it is morally right to take away their freedom?

11. In your blog post, you did not answer the question you posed "Why did the MLP source its dolphins from the wild instead of from captive sources?" Did RWS purchase wild-caught dolphins because they are cheaper than captive bred ones?

12. RWS has stated that the bottlenose dolphins are not classified as endangered nor are they threatened with extinction. Why then is it so important for RWS to breed them in captivity?

13. Can RWS let the public know which airline will be transporting the dolphins to Singapore if they do come?

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Louis Ng (MSc)

Executive Director

ACRES (Animal Concerns Research and Education Society)

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