



SIERRA CLUB

NORTH STAR CHAPTER

Sierra Club North Star Chapter
2300 Myrtle Avenue, Suite 260
Saint Paul, MN 55114

March 19, 2025

Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Environment Committee

Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for:

- [HF2034](#) (Bierman) - **Minnesota Zoological Garden funding provided, and money appropriated.**

Dear Co-Chairs, Vice Co-Chairs, and Committee Members:

Founded in 1968, the Sierra Club North Star Chapter is a non-profit environmental organization representing over representing over 50,000 members and supporters across Minnesota. The Sierra Club works to safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and litigation.

As a leading grassroots voice working to preserve and protect Minnesota's environment, we empower volunteer leaders to act through environmental advocacy, community organizing, and outdoor exploration. We participate in the administrative process to encourage environmental health and sustainability, long term wildlife and habitat protection, and biodiversity goals.

One of the most alarming facts of our times is that wildlife is disappearing worldwide: the latest edition of the Living Planet Report, which measures the average change in population sizes of more than 5,000 vertebrate species, shows a decline of 73% between 1970 and 2020. See that statistic and more data on page 5 of the Executive Summary in the report at: <https://livingplanet.panda.org/en-us/>.

That is why we support House File 2034 which will help fund and continue the Minnesota Zoo's "mission *to connect people, animals, and the natural world to save wildlife*. Cutting-edge exhibits provide exciting experiences with animals and their habitats introducing guests to species from around the globe. Education programs engage audiences at the Zoo, throughout the region, and around world. Conservation programs protect endangered species and preserve critical ecosystems."

That mission is shared at: <https://mnzoo.org/us/> along with their conservation work highlighted at: <https://mnzoo.org/mnzoo-conservation>, including their important pollinator conservation work because many pollinators are in trouble right now, too, as explained at: <https://mnzoo.org/conservation/minnesota/saving-minnesotas-prairie-butterfly-heritage/>.

In addition, the Minnesota Zoo's renewed AZA accreditation in 2023 has been ongoing since 1990: <https://mnzoo.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Minnesota-Zoo-earns-prestigious-AZA-accreditation.pdf> along with its work in various species recovery programs help to fulfill Sierra Club's advocacy goals listed in our nationwide Wildlife and Native Plants Policy including the following three items at: <https://www.sierraclub.org/policy/wildlife/wildlife-and-native-plants>:

4. Threatened and Endangered Species -- Because of species' value to ecosystems and to humans and for their intrinsic values, every effort should be made to prevent the extinction of species due to human activities. The Sierra Club vigorously supports strong and vibrant federal and state endangered species acts and related laws as well as **recovery programs that protect wildlife, plants, and natural ecosystems.**
11. Zoos, Aquaria and Botanical Gardens -- Public and private zoos, aquaria and botanical gardens should be well-maintained and properly regulated and **serve important educational, preservation, and scientific needs.**
12. International Cooperation -- Bilateral and multilateral agreements and cooperative efforts should ensure that wildlife, native plants, and their natural ecosystems are managed in all countries in a manner consistent with the positions advocated here...”
(which includes **international conservation work between zoos and others** which will also fulfill our policy recognition that ‘Wildlife, plants, and their ecosystems have value in their own right, as well as value to humans and to the health of the biosphere.’)

We thereby support House File which is:

A bill for an act relating to zoos; appropriating money for the Minnesota Zoological Garden.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. MINNESOTA ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN; APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) \$17,057,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$17,057,000 in fiscal year 2027 are appropriated from the general fund to the Minnesota Zoological Board.

(b) \$255,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$255,000 in fiscal year 2027 are appropriated from the natural resources fund to the Minnesota Zoological Board from the revenue deposited under Minnesota Statutes, section 297A.94, paragraph (h), clause (5).

In summary, along with many supporters of the Minnesota Zoo's conservation work, we at the Sierra Club North Star Chapter look forward to House Bill 2034's passage as well as the Zoo's many learning programs and exciting activities for Minnesota residents and state visitors to enjoy year-round.

Thank you,

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Including the following:

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