

Metro

Measure 26-244

they are “wild”. **What do you think?**

Macdonald, J.F.

(This information furnished by J.F. Macdonald)

ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION

In December 2023, the Governor along with prominent business leaders announced a **three-year moratorium on ALL new taxes** in order to revitalize Portland’s downtown and the region’s economy.

Make no mistake: this bond is a **\$380,000,000.00 NEW TAX**. Property tax bonds raise the cost of housing for owners and renters alike. **This bond makes no sense during a housing affordability crisis.**

Why can’t Metro behave like other cultural institutions by fundraising? The Oregon Zoo Foundation already has \$11,000,000.00 annual revenue, \$22,000,000.00 assets, and it pays its Executive Director \$235,615.00 per year. Oh, and then there’s Metro’s hotel tax levied on the tourists who actually go to the Oregon Zoo.

I guess the cronies over at Metro are typical lying politicians up to yet more monkey business for their pet projects. At a minimum, you should demand our local leaders work together to coordinate tax policy. The only reason Metro put this bond on the ballot is their previous tax is expiring. The zoo has no pressing new capital needs or expansion plans, and Metro has no concrete spending plan. It’s just a **pork barrel slush fund** greenwashed with vague “climate resilient animal shelters” at a time when Portland can’t even house people. We should conserve our limited bonding capacity for transformative infrastructure investments such as high-speed rail.

The Peoples’ Republic of **Metro already has an unallocated \$450,000,000.00 “Parks and Nature” bond** (aka slush fund) it can use for its animal farm. The last I heard, in Oldspeak, animals count as “nature,” and the Oregon Zoo is in a park. That bond came under a scathing audit in 2023 for its mismanagement and skewed priorities: overpaying for farmland purchased from politically connected insiders, making it off-limits to the public, leasing it to agribusiness corporations for profit, and calling it a Newpark. All parks are equal, but some parks are equaler than others, I guess.

Monkey Vote NO.

This argument furnished by Thomas J Busse

(This information furnished by Thomas J Busse)

ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION

Taxpayers Association of Oregon urges
No on 26-244

The Zoo has been extremely wasteful and now wants you -- the taxpayers -- to reward their mismanagement with a huge tax hike.

ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION

\$380,000,000.00 “Whatever” Zoo Bond

What do you call a prison for wild animals? A Zoo

Confining wild animals in small enclosures and cages, so that people can walk by and gawk at them is unnatural. Elephants can travel 25 miles a day in the wild.

- With our access to the internet, movies, videos, etc., we can see wild animals in their wild natural settings.
- The day of wild life circuses and zoos is ebbing.
- The Zoo’s \$8.5 million annual budget comes from property taxes, tickets and other sources. This \$380 million “Whatever” bond does not define, what the funds will be used for.
- We need to rethink the future use of Zoo’s 640 acre compound. It could be a OSU extension school in food science, where our young citizen learn hand-on about the the food they eat, it could include 4-H, Nature Conservancy, Oregon Humane Societies, a place where animal organizations could work together.
- The Zoo has 1,600 animal inmates, who’s only crime is

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Voters last approved a Zoo bond in 2008. A lot has changed since then. Metro has run the Zoo into the ground, and they want you—the taxpayers—to bail them out.

- **Zoo wants higher taxes to pay for 19% fewer visitors** (since 2008). (1)
- **Zoo chases away families by recklessly raising prices 160%** (since 2008).
- **Zoo raises both prices and taxes while providing less service.** In 2008, the Zoo had a summer concert series with 16 national and international acts. The Zoo has “eliminated concerts” according to Metro’s latest budget. (2)
- **Zoo is doing less even though we give them more money.** 2008 Zoo bond funds were used to build two big new exhibits (Serengeti, Red Ape Reserve). The current Zoo bond merely “updates” three already existing exhibits.
- **Zoo is cutting service even though we give more money.** In 2008, the Zoo Train ran a 40 minute loop through Washington Park for only \$4 a ride. Today, the trip is only 5 minutes long and costs \$5 a ride. In 2019, Metro’s President announced that the Zoo Train’s original route would not be restored and it would be replaced by a trail. The trail was never built.

Stop rewarding wasteful spending with tax hikes.

Stop rewarding Zoo mismanagement with tax hikes.

The Taxpayers Association of Oregon has protected you from higher taxes and government waste for 25 years. follow us at OregonWatchdog.com.

Sources: (1) 1.6 million visitors in 2008. Today, it’s 1.3 million. (2) Metro Budget, FY 2023-24. (3) the penguin, sea otter, and giraffe exhibits.

(This information furnished by Jason Williams, Taxpayers Association of Oregon)

ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION

METRO sits on \$1 billion surplus

Portland sits on \$170 million surplus

Yet, they both want \$380 million more from you!

Metro, which runs the Zoo, has an estimated \$1 billion surplus from their recent tax as explained by OPB;

“Portland metro area’s homeless tax could bring in nearly \$1 billion in unexpected revenue by 2029” --- OPB 10/26/23

Portland has an estimated \$170 million surplus from their recent energy tax as explained by The Oregonian;

“The fund’s authors estimated it would raise about \$30

million a year ... Since then, the revenue has grown exponentially every year...The tax is now expected to raise more than \$200 million annually.” Oregonian 2/29/24

There you go.

Metro has a \$1 billion surplus.

Portland has a \$170 million surplus.

If both Metro and Portland are swimming in nearly **\$1.2 billion surplus**, why are they asking voters to approve a **\$380 million property tax increase** to fund Zoo construction projects?

Metro regional government can afford to be wasteful because there are effectively only two similar regional Metro governments in the entire United States. Thousands of cities are able to fund their local area Zoos without a third layer government Metro government bureaucracy driving up the cost.

Stop punishing taxpayers with tax hikes when politicians are sitting on surplus tax revenue.

Taxpayers Association of Oregon urges
No on 26-244

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(This information furnished by Jason Williams, Taxpayers Association of Oregon)

ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION

Vote NO on 26-244

This \$380 million bond is an expensive **money grab** by Metro after failing to address homelessness. It enriches zoo management and contractors, not animals. Special interests are spending over \$600,000 with a PAC to promote this giveaway.

The zoo has no clear spending plan for \$380 million. It is plainly NOT based on need. Misleadingly termed a bond renewal, it is over three times the previous \$125 million bond!

The previous bond was an **expensive failure**:

- A mere 1.5% of the money was spent on native wildlife.
- Over \$57 million was spent on “Elephant Lands” which enriched construction companies but has been devastating for elephants.
- Four elephants (Rama, Tusko, Packy and Lily) have died of avoidable causes since its opening nine years ago.
- Chendra has gone through an ill-advised pregnancy, aggressive tuberculosis and a tragic miscarriage – all entirely avoidable.

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- All surviving elephants have foot diseases caused by zoo captivity.
- Medical records show fighting and bullying among the elephants resulting in injuries.
- In Defense of Animals rated Oregon Zoo among the ten worst zoos for elephants.

Learning about Chendra's sad plight a reputed elephant sanctuary, Elephant Refuge North America, made an all-expense paid offer to rehabilitate her. The zoo rejected it! Chendra is still languishing in poor health.

Do not reward failure with more money!

Oregon Zoo is a failing institution:

- Attendance has been on a downward trend for over a decade.
- Its expenses have been going up over the years, always well-exceeding revenues.
- Last year alone we bailed them out with \$25 million of our tax dollars.
- Homeowners and renters should not be forced to pay for the zoo's wastefulness!

Vote NO on 26-244

The Zoo **squandered** the last tax handout!
NO TO AN ADDITIONAL \$380 MILLION

For details, visit www.voteno2zoo.bond

Free the Oregon Zoo Elephants
Gimme Shelter Portland
In Defense of Animals
Heart of Ganesh
Animal Rights Collective Portland

(This information furnished by Bala Seshasayee, Free the Oregon Zoo Elephants)

ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION

VOTE NO ON METRO'S ZOO BOND MEASURE 26-244

\$380 MILLION ASK

Metro is once again asking taxpayers to approve another zoo bond, this time for a shocking \$380 million. This is the just second of Metro's many planned cash grabs - the last zoo bond measure, for \$125 million, passed in 2008.

WHO BENEFITS?

Stakeholders are pouring hundreds of thousands of dollars promoting a yes vote on this latest measure, hoping for a \$380 million windfall to benefit zoo leadership, management, highly paid consultants, contractors and sub-contractors. Don't be fooled - this has nothing to do with animal welfare.

STAGGERING LOSSES

According to Metro's own records, zoo attendance was down 28% in 2023 from its 2018 high, while expenses

are increasing. In the year 2023, the Oregon Zoo lost \$25 million or \$68,943 per day. Taxpayers are on the hook to subsidize this loss. If voters approve the latest bond, the daily subsidy will increase to \$108,000 per day.

DECEPTIVE MARKETING

In its attempt to sell voters on Measure 26-244, Metro is deliberately using vague, generalized terms to describe attractive sounding projects that they state will "update exhibits", "improve facilities", "conserve water and energy" and "increase accessibility". No goals, objectives, timelines or specific outcomes governing how the money will be spent are offered. In fact, as stated in the measure, a "plan" will not be presented to the Metro council, for months after it passes.

NO MORE \$\$\$ FOR METRO VOTE NO ON METRO'S ZOO BOND MEASURE 26-244

(This information furnished by Barbara Spears)

ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION

METRO vs. TAXPAYERS

Once again, an insatiable Metro attacks not only the intelligence, but also the strained pocketbooks of beleaguered taxpayers by nonchalantly floating a massive \$380 million dollar bond that, yet again, promises to fix all the ongoing problems at the zoo. Forget that none of the animals want to be forced to live in tiny artificial environments, and focus instead on why it costs so much public money to maintain this place. With falling attendance from a disinterested public, Metro taxpayers have to bail out the zoo every year with massive infusions of cash.

The Oregon Zoo is an entertainment facility that generates an unconscionable and accelerating deficit of over \$25 million dollars per year. Metro then subsidizes that deficit to the tune of \$68,943 dollars per day. Yes, you read that right. \$68,943... per day. Every day. 365 days a year. And that deficit is growing at an accelerating rate. Add in the money Metro requests in this bond and the deficit balloons to more than \$108,000 per day. That's your money, by the way.

Most disturbingly, this bond is written with a flagrant disregard for specifics, and assumes you are stupid by proclaiming they're allowed to ponder and discuss what to do with the money until months after its passage. Given Metro's track record, do you trust them to invest your money in projects that promise we won't be called on yet again? You'd better think no as this measure is now titled Phase 2, implying Phase 3 is next, as is Phase 4, and 5, and 6, and on and on until taxpayers decide they no longer want to subsidize Metro's unsustainable debt. Do the animals a favor. Do yourself a favor:

Vote NO on Metro's favorite money pit, the latest Zoo Bond, Measure 26-244

(This information furnished by Jon Gramstad)

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ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION

Signs that Metro & Portland may have an addiction problem

... an addiction to taxes.

Portland isn't just addicted to meth ... they're addicted to taxes.

Here are 8 signs of addiction:

Addiction Sign #1 = "Addicts always need one more hit": Portland voters have suffered 10 major local tax increases since 2018. There are 3 more local taxes on the ballot right now.

Addiction Sign #2 = "Addicts lack any moderation". Portland is rated the second highest tax place in America (KOIN 2/17/23). There's no moderation, just extreme taxes.

Addition Sign #3 = "Addicts chase away friends". Portland area lost 14,000 taxpayers in 2022.

Addiction Sign #4 = "Addicts can't hold a job". High taxes kill jobs. Oregon Business reported "Portland Office Vacancies Reach Historic Highs" (10/9/23). The vacancy rate hit 30%.

Addiction Sign #5 = "Addicts never stop at one drug". We have local taxes that seldom exist anywhere else in America like ... the Portland Arts Tax, Portland's Clean Energy Surcharge, Multnomah Income Tax for preschool, METRO's 1% income tax for homeless, and METRO's (\$652 million) property tax for private housing programs.

Addiction Sign #6 = "Addicts use more for a smaller high". We keep getting higher taxes but we somehow end up with fewer police, fewer new roads, fewer school days and more pot holes, more graffiti, more crime and more homeless.

Addiction Sign #7 = "Addicts can't be trusted". Think of the politicians broken promises.

Addiction Sign #8 = "Addicts seek a higher high". The next tax to hit you in 2025 is tolling. If you want to stop tolling, please sign petition (IP#4) which gives voters the right to vote on tolling projects in their neighborhood at OregonWatchdog.com/petition.

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(This information furnished by Jason Williams, Taxpayers Association of Oregon)