



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

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**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

**MAYOR BREED KICKSTARTS FUNDRAISING EFFORTS TO  
SUPPORT GIANT PANDAS**

*The Mayor will introduce legislation allowing the Mayor and City agencies to participate in fundraising efforts to cover costs of Giant Pandas in lieu of taxpayer funds*

**San Francisco, CA** – Today, Mayor London N. Breed introduced a resolution at the Board of Supervisors to allow various City departments, including the Recreation and Parks Department, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development and the San Francisco International Airport, to raise funds from philanthropists and private entities to support the San Francisco Zoo in hosting Giant Pandas from the People's Republic of China.

This legislation is a key step in the fundraising process required to welcome the Giant Pandas to the San Francisco Zoo in 2025. No specific timeline for arrival has been determined yet, as it is predicated on the construction or renovation of an enclosure at the SF Zoo. This enclosure will be funded by philanthropic funds, not taxpayer funds. Mayor Breed will lead a fundraising effort, but those efforts cannot commence with any city advocacy until this legislation is passed.

Costs have not been determined for the enclosure yet, which is still being designed. In May the China National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) will lead a delegation to San Francisco to meet with the Mayor's Office, San Francisco Zoo, and Zoological Society as immediate next steps. They will discuss the agreement between the China Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA) and the Zoo, and follow-up on procedures the City must adhere to, including determining cost and needs to ensure NFGA and CWCA specifications are met and next steps.

“Securing the agreement to welcome Giant Pandas to San Francisco was just a first step for us,” said Mayor Breed. “We have a lot of work ahead to raise the funds and build the enclosure at our Zoo that will serve as their home and thrill residents and visitors. We are hitting the ground running in our fundraising efforts and I’m confident we will have strong philanthropic support from the community that is excited to support San Francisco and our new panda friends.”

The legislation is required because the City's behested payments ordinance restricts the ability of City officials and staff to solicit funds from philanthropists and other private entities for charitable and governmental purposes. The law allows for limited waivers to allow City departments to fundraise for specified projects that will serve the public interest. The resolution will provide a temporary exception for departments to fundraise for the sole purpose of bringing pandas to San Francisco using private donations that will be publicly reported.



Mayor Breed's resolution will assist SFZS in fundraising to cover the costs of preparing for and maintaining the pandas, including building or renovating a panda enclosure that promotes a safe and thriving environment, and developing staff capacity, without relying on taxpayer funds. The resolution allows for a temporary and limited waiver of restrictions on City departments fundraising in partnerships with private sponsors to raise adequate funding to pay for the lease of giant pandas brought to San Francisco.

These efforts will enable the City to cost-effectively partner with the private and nonprofit sector, to build on San Francisco's rich, cultural connections between the City and China and cultivate economic opportunities as part of San Francisco's revitalization efforts.

The San Francisco Zoo is owned by the City and County of San Francisco and operated by the nonprofit San Francisco Zoological Society (SFZS). SFZS relies on private donations, admission fees and a limited amount of City funding to administer the Zoo, which is home to over 2,000 exotic, endangered and rescued animals, representing more than 250 species.

On April 19, during her visit to China with a delegation of San Francisco business and civic leaders, Mayor Breed and officials from the China National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) and the China Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA) announced that the San Francisco Zoo had been selected to receive pandas as part of China's Panda Diplomacy Program.

As a first step, the Mayor and CWCA signed a Letter of Intent, in which they agreed the San Francisco Zoological Society and the CWCA will partner on the international conservation of giant pandas and work together to bring a pair of leased pandas to the San Francisco Zoo in 2025. Last week, experts and engineers were sent by the NFGA and CWCA to San Francisco to meet with the Zoo and consulted on the design, construction or renovation options for the proposed panda enclosures. Guidance for the Zoo included developing adequate food supply and obtaining the technical expertise and personnel capability necessary to accommodate the pandas.

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