

Seattle zoo slammed for elephant breeding

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The Woodland Park Zoo has become the target of strong criticism aimed at stopping the elephant breeding program at the Seattle facility.

Members of the animal rights group, In Defense of Animals, have demanded that zoo officials call off plans to artificially inseminate an elephant, whose recent offspring died from a herpes infection, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer said Wednesday.

"It is just common sense. You have a contaminated facility. There is a very, very good chance you will have another death," activist Catherine Doyle said Tuesday.

Zoo officials are planning on using sperm from a male elephant living in Canada to inseminate their elephant, despite the fact that two elephants there have died from elephant herpes virus.

The zoo's deputy director, Bruce Bohmke, defended that decision on Tuesday, saying the risk is minimal and the breeding program will go forward as planned.

"There is always a risk in everything," Bohmke told the newspaper. "If you have one death, that doesn't make it more likely that you will have another."

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