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Last Chance for Animals Joins Lawsuit to Stop the Transfer of 5 Beluga Whales from Marineland Canada to Mystic Aquarium

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 02, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Last Chance for Animals \(LCA\)](#), an international animal rights organization, joined a lawsuit launched by [Friends of Animals \(FoA\)](#), an international animal advocacy organization, against the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to stop the transfer of five beluga whales from Marineland in Niagara Falls to Mystic Aquarium in Connecticut. LCA will be joining the lawsuit as co-plaintiff.

Mystic Aquarium in Connecticut was issued a permit by the NMFS to import five Beluga whales from Marineland Canada. The permit is valid until August 31, 2025. Transferring the whales would require a difficult journey of over 10 hours, by multiple means of transportation. Furthermore, the transportation of the whales from Marineland to Mystic would create stress, and destroy the social bonds the whales have already formed at Marineland.

Under the five-year term of the permit, breeding the Beluga whales is prohibited; however, breeding may be permitted once the term has ended. Breeding the Beluga whales in Canada would violate the *Criminal Code* which criminalizes the breeding of captive cetaceans. Moving the whales to Mystic would take them out of the important, hard-fought protections of Bill S-203 and leave them vulnerable to breeding and thereby perpetuating the cycle of captivity of these majestic creatures. The Canadian government has not announced a decision on whether it will allow Marineland to export the whales.

“Transferring these intelligent and sentient animals from one aquarium to another only benefit the aquariums,” said Chris DeRose, President, and Founder of Last Chance for Animals. “The best, most humane course of action would be for the whales to have one final transfer to a sanctuary, where they can live out their days free from discomfort, captive breeding, and research.”

The suit, entitled *Friends of Animals and Last Chance for Animals v. Wilbur Ross and National Marine Fisheries Service* was filed at the United States District Court, District of Connecticut. Case file number: No. 3:20-cv-01312-AWT.

Mystic would be jointly purchasing these whales with the Georgia Aquarium. The Georgia Aquarium did not have to complete an application for the permit to be issued.

LCA strongly believes whales should not be kept in captivity and is calling on the governments of both Canada and the United States to prevent this harmful transfer of Beluga whales from Marineland Canada to Mystic Aquarium. LCA believes the transfer would cause undue stress and prolong the suffering of captive whales by allowing breeding at the expiration date of the permit, which will thereby allow the suffering of captive cetaceans to perpetuate.

ABOUT LAST CHANCE FOR ANIMALS:

LCA is an international non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating animal exploitation through education, investigations, legislation, and public awareness campaigns. Since its formation in 1984, LCA has succeeded as one of the nation's pioneer animal advocacy groups. LCA's educational and public outreach programs have empowered the public to make positive changes for animals in their communities. For more information, visit <https://www.lcanimal.org/>.

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