



The opinions expressed in this letter are those of the Zoo Miami Foundation Board of Directors and not of Zoo Miami and/or Miami-Dade County

Zoo Miami stands as a beacon of pride among America's top zoos, a cherished gem within Miami-Dade County's Parks system, and a must-visit destination for tourists. Since 1956, the Zoo Miami Foundation has been the private, non-profit partner organization of Zoo Miami. Our mission is rooted in conservation and support for Zoo Miami.

In 1997, Miami-Dade County's Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces (PROS) initiated a theme park feasibility study, sparking optimism for economic advancement in the region. In 2006, the vision gained support from Miami-Dade County residents, with 64% of voters endorsing a referendum to establish an entertainment district at Zoo Miami.

Initially, the Foundation conditionally welcomed the Miami Wilds Project, drawn by its potential economic boost and the prospect of a steady revenue stream that could fortify Zoo Miami's conservation endeavors. The Foundation's conditional endorsement hinged on two vital factors: (1) Addressing, any and all, environmental concerns and (2) coming to terms on the issue of paid parking.

At this point, the Zoo Miami Foundation does not believe that either of these concerns have been adequately addressed. In the past three years, more information has been learned about the environmentally sensitive nature of this critical habitat and our volunteers and patrons have expressed sincere concerns about the impact that Miami Wilds would have on threatened and endangered species. Furthermore, additional developments in the surrounding area have further reduced the natural habitat of unique species in the Pine Rocklands.

The introduction of paid parking, deterring potential visitors, adds another layer of apprehension. Until these concerns are earnestly and satisfactorily resolved, the Zoo Miami Foundation cannot endorse the current iteration of the Miami Wilds project and is in opposition to it. The well-being of the environment, the seamless enjoyment of our visitors, and the Zoo's mission to conserve wildlife demand nothing less than meticulous attention and thoughtful action.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Romano', is placed above the typed name and title.

Jose C Romano
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