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*An international organization dedicated to conservation through public display and conservation.*

**Date: Feb. 20, 2017**

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**Alliance rejects Virgin Holidays' altered position and pledge  
on whales and dolphins in human care**

The Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums is shocked and disappointed by the London-based travel company Virgin Holidays' decision to release today an altered position and revised pledge about dolphins and whales in human care. The Alliance, whose members represent the world's largest group of dolphin and whale experts, will not sign the newly worded pledge, which changes the intent and provisions of an agreement reached in 2014.

Without Alliance members' knowledge or input, the 2014 pledge language and expectations drastically changed. As a result, the Alliance believes the changes violate the spirit of the previous collaboration and are harmful to zoos, aquariums and marine parks and their animals.

"Many of our members who planned to sign the pledge say they will not add their signature to the new one," said Alliance President and CEO Kathleen Dezio. "The changes Virgin Holidays made to the pledge agreement are insulting to zoological facilities and their animal care professionals, and the tenets of the new altered pledge are harmful, not helpful, to the conservation and scientific research work done by zoos and aquariums and the welfare of the animals in our care. The revised pledge is unacceptable and comes not from a collaboration, but from the agenda of animal rights organizations that were unhappy with the original Virgin pledge and want to end opportunities for the public to learn about and develop an appreciation for these animals and the oceans in which they live."

After meeting in good faith with Virgin staff and leadership and several animal rights group representatives in Virgin-hosted sessions, many Alliance members agreed in 2014 to sign the initial pledge. It outlined guidelines for continued collaboration between Virgin Holidays and accredited marine mammal facilities and destinations that offer educational, interactive experiences with dolphins and whales. Many travel companies and cruise lines offer their passengers the

opportunity to visit Alliance facilities and enjoy these life-changing experiences that ensure the safety of people and animals.

Dolphins thrive in human care, and as a result, the population born in accredited U.S. facilities has continued to grow for decades without any additional animals being brought in from the wild, with the exception of injured or ill dolphins that are rescued and provided forever homes when they cannot survive on their own in the wild.

Collectively, the Alliance represents the world's largest group of marine mammal researchers, rescuers and care experts. They work at accredited facilities and dedicate their lives to marine mammals, to ocean health and to inspiring and educating the public about saving marine life and conserving our oceans.

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