Dear [Senator/Representative] [LAST NAME]

I am writing to you as a concerned constituent regarding the relocation and release of Lolita the Killer Whale, currently residing at Miami Seaquarium, as proposed by The Dolphin Company and Friends of Lolita. I am writing to urge your support in opposing this proposal as it is contrary to Lolita’s best interests given her age and health, and it further puts at risk the endangered killer whale pods that reside in the Salish Sea.

Lolita (Tokitae) is a killer whale that has resided at Miami Seaquarium since 1970 after being caught in Puget Sound. The Dolphin Company, who owns Miami Seaquarium, announced that they will work with the activist group, Friends of Lolita, to relocate and release this geriatric whale into the Salish Sea in Washington State. The announcement and underlying releases from both organizations do not address the numerous issues associated with releasing a marine mammal that has been under human care for over 50 years, including the numerous federal regulatory hurdles under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act. Numerous zoological and professional organizations are also questioning the announcement’s lack of feasibility, scientific-based assessments, and numerous regulatory approvals. Even the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) previously stated that any proposed release of Toki would require “rigorous scientific review” for “a whale which has spent most of its life in captivity raises many concerns that would need to be carefully addressed.”

Unfortunately, Toki’s advanced age and on-going health conditions make her a poor candidate for life in the wild or even a sea pen. Toki has lived in her current pool at Miami Seaquarium for the last 53 years. She’s had access to routine and urgent medical care, restaurant-quality food, and an unchanging environment. Moving her is highly risky due to the enormous stress it will put on her, both physically and mentally. At her age and declining health condition, it’s likely that any type of relocation to an uncontrolled environment without proper care, monitoring, and access to immediate health care would kill her. Toki has lived in a carefully managed environment, but in a sea pen, Toki will be exposed to pollutants and pathogens for which she has no immunity, while in an already compromised health state. Furthermore, the local Southern Resident killer whales, protected under the Endangered Species Act, will also be at risk as Toki’s presence in their waters exposes them to potentially deadly pathogens for which they have no immunity. As a result, the NOAA regulations will likely find that Toki is not a viable candidate for release.

I urge you to ensure that NOAA continues to provide an independent assessment according to federal laws and regulations, rather than allowing corporate and activist agendas to endanger Toki. Please ensure that NOAA advocates for Toki’s general health and well-being while minimizing risks to both her and the endangered Southern Resident pod. Tokitae has spent the last 50 years entertaining crowds at Miami Seaquarium; she deserves for her needs to be put first this time.

Sincerely

[YOUR NAME]