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## Group Demands Federal Probe Of Six Flags Giraffe Death

### ***Animal Rights Group: Giraffe Died Due To Improper Maintenance***

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**Vallejo, Calif.** -- An animal rights group is calling for a federal investigation into the death of a giraffe in a barn fire earlier this week, according to a statement from the group.

In Defense of Animals (IDA) has filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Agriculture asking for a probe into the death of the 2-year-old male giraffe named Makonnen at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom in Vallejo.

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IDA asked the USDA to investigate whether the death was caused by lack of proper facility maintenance, resulting in an electrical outlet malfunction in the giraffe barn.

The federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) requires exhibitors to maintain housing facilities in good repair in order to protect animals from injury, the group said in a statement.

IDA also cited concerns with lack of overnight monitoring of animals at the park.

"Makonnen's tragic death highlights the plight of the animals confined at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom," stated IDA president Elliot M. Katz. "Wild animals like giraffes, elephants and tigers simply do not belong in the noisy, stressful and unnatural environment of an amusement park."

In the decade since Six Flags took over management (and complete ownership as of Aug. 31, 2007) of the amusement park, dozens of animals have died, including both of the park's orcas (killer whales), five elephants (plus two full-term calves) and several dolphins, IDA said.

In June, IDA filed a complaint with the USDA, alleging that Six Flags violated the AWA by failing to provide adequate veterinary care and failing to provide the space and conditions that are conducive to the elephants' health and well being.

"Six Flags has a long and terrible history of animal suffering and death," said Katz. "It's time to put the welfare of the animals first and remove them entirely from the Six Flags amusement park."

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