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For Immediate Release  
4/2/2026

## The Clock Is Ticking: CALM Zoo Needs Kern County's Help to Make the Ballot

*Nearly 30,000 signatures from registered voters are needed by May to give voters the chance to decide CALM Zoo's future — and the community is close*

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. — April 2, 2026 — For more than 40 years, the California Living Museum CALM Zoo has been where Kern County families come to connect with California's wildlife. Now, for the first time in a generation, the community has the opportunity to decide the zoo's future — but only if enough people step up in the next few weeks.

A campaign is underway to qualify a measure for the November ballot that would fund a sweeping 20-year Master Plan for CALM Zoo, improving animal habitats, expanding educational programs, and building the kind of world-class facility that Kern County families deserve. To make it happen, nearly 30,000 signatures from registered voters must be collected by May for the November 2026 ballot.

Signature gatherers are currently active across Kern County. The effort is close but the deadline is real, and every signature counts.

*"CALM Zoo has been part of Kern County's story for four decades. This is our chance to make sure it's part of the next four decades, and it starts with a signature. Signing the petition doesn't mean you're voting. It simply means you believe the community deserves an opportunity to vote in November."*

**—Madelyn Janssen, CALM Board Member and Former KGET Reporter**

The proposed measure would be funded by a 1/8 of one percent sales tax that adds just a little over half a penny to a \$5 purchase — a cost most consumers will barely notice. Voters would have the final say in November.

CALM Zoo is dedicated exclusively to California's native species. Located in Bakersfield, CALM Zoo welcomes more than 100,000 visitors annually, serving generations of Kern County families.



*“We’re so close to getting this on the ballot but signature gathering teams only have another month to get this done. If CALM Zoo has ever meant something to you or your family, now is the time to add your name. Help us bring this to voters and get Kern County on the way to a world-class zoo.”*

**— Jim Damian, Businessman & President of the Board, Protect CALM Zoo**

The Master Plan envisions CALM Zoo growing into a destination-class facility on par with the Fresno Chaffee Zoo — right here in Kern County, serving the families who live here. Signing the petition is the first step. It does not constitute a vote in favor of the measure, it simply qualifies the measure for the November ballot so that all Kern County voters can decide.

To sign the petition, find a signature gatherer at participating community locations across Bakersfield and greater Kern County, or visit [ProtectCALMZoo.org](http://ProtectCALMZoo.org) for more information and to connect with the campaign.

**Watch the Video PSA**

**[ProtectCALMZoo.org](http://ProtectCALMZoo.org)**

**Share widely. Every view is a potential signature.**

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### **About CALM Zoo**

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The California Living Museum (CALM Zoo) is the only zoo in the country dedicated exclusively to California’s native species. Located in Bakersfield, CALM Zoo has served over 100,000 visitors annually since its founding in 1983. CALM Zoo’s mission is to forge a connection and appreciation between the community and the California ecosystem through education, guest experiences, and conservation. Learn more at [calmzoo.org](http://calmzoo.org).

### **About the Campaign**

[ProtectCALMZoo.org](http://ProtectCALMZoo.org) is the home of the campaign to qualify a community measure supporting CALM Zoo's 20-year Master Plan for the November ballot. For more information or to get involved, visit [ProtectCALMZoo.org](http://ProtectCALMZoo.org). Petitions are available to sign in person at CALM Zoo.