

Pamela Anderson

The Honourable Oommen Chandy
Chief Minister of Kerala

Via e-mail: chiefminister@kerala.gov.in; oc@oommenchandy.net

Dear Mr, Minister,

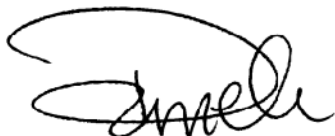
My friends at People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India know that the well-being of elephants is close to my heart, so they've let me know that the Animal Welfare Board of India has advised Kerala officials that real elephants cannot be used for the upcoming Thrissur Pooram on April 29 since they're not registered with the board. I support this decision with every fibre of my being, and I'd like to offer my support for what is a wonderful opportunity to make a stunning, humane spectacle that everyone would talk about and that would garner international praise.

To respect both the spirit of the festival and elephants who are held captive for human use—a practice that started long ago, before we knew of their intelligence and complex social nature—I would like to contribute the cost of providing 30 elephants made of bamboo, wood and/or papier-mâché to replace the live elephants who would have been paraded at an estimated cost of 10,000 INR per elephant. As you may know, when the Confederation of Tamilnadu Malayalee Associations wanted to celebrate Thrissur Pooram, it used such delightful faux elephants when it was denied permission to use real ones and aroused everyone's admiration, joy, amusement, and delight. It would be exciting to celebrate Thrissur Pooram that way again.

Since Kerala is a major tourist destination that I plan to visit one day, I'm sure you know that both Indian and international public opinion is turning solidly against the use of elephants in captivity. Seeing elephants in chains and forced to walk on hot pavement under the threat of an *ankush* or other weapon makes people sad and can ruin their holiday. I hope you agree that—given that there have been more than 500 human deaths in the last 15 years in Kerala alone from elephants who retaliated against this abuse—it's time for a change.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,



Pamela Anderson

cc: K.R. Haridas, Special Devaswom Commissioner (admin@cochindevaswomboard.org)