

MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION
4340 EAST-WEST HIGHWAY, ROOM 905
BETHESDA, MD 20814-4447

4 May 2007

Don Neubacher
Park Superintendent
Point Reyes National SeaShore
Point Reyes Station
CA 94956

Dear Mr. Neubacher:

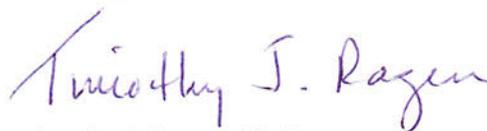
As I am sure you know, attempting to maintain the natural integrity of nearshore ecosystems around all of our nation's coastlines has become a great challenge due to increasing human population and associated coastal development. Coastal areas are sometimes lost in large parcels due to large-scale development. But such habitat also is often lost in small allotments, foot-by-foot, and acre-by-acre.

It has been brought to my attention that activities associated with commercial shellfish operations (oyster farming) are leading to the disturbance of harbor seals at Drakes Estero in Point Reyes National Seashore. This is an issue that would be of interest to our Commissioners and Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, as protection of marine mammal habitat is one of the essential elements of marine mammal conservation.

Unfortunately, I have just learned of this issue and have not had time to bring this matter to the attention of our Commissioners so that they might give it their full consideration and consult with our Committee regarding the implications for the affected harbor seals. I understand that a meeting is to be held today to consider possible management measures pertinent to this issue. If it is possible, I would appreciate an opportunity to inform our Commissioners regarding this situation so that we might comment on those measures.

I appreciate your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director