



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

9 November 2009

Mr. P. Michael Payne, Chief
Permits, Conservation, and Education Division
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225

Re: Permit Application No. 14802
(Oregon Coast Aquarium)

Dear Mr. Payne:

The Marine Mammal Commission, in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed the above-referenced permit application with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The applicant is requesting authorization to import up to eight harbor seals from the Vancouver Aquarium Science Center, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, to the Oregon Coast Aquarium, Newport, Oregon, for public display. The seals would be stranded animals that have been rehabilitated but determined unsuitable for release back into the wild.

RECOMMENDATION

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service issue the requested permit, provided that it determines that the applicant's program for education or conservation is consistent with the professionally recognized standards of the public display community. Given that the animals would be coming from outside the United States, the Marine Mammal Commission further recommends that the importation of seals under this permit be contingent on concurrence by the National Marine Fisheries Service that the animals are not candidates for release to the wild.

The Commission believes that the activities for which it has recommended approval are consistent with the purposes and policies of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Please contact me if you or your staff has any questions concerning this recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy J. Ragen".

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: Barbara Kohn, D.V