



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

4 May 2010

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

Re: Permit Application No. 15206
(SeaWorld, LLC)

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 one male adult beluga whale from the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Center, British Columbia, Canada, to Sea World of Texas for purposes of public display. The animal was captured at approximately two years of age in western Hudson Bay, Churchill, Manitoba, Canada, in 1990 and has been maintained at the Vancouver Aquarium since that time.

RECOMMENDATION

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service approve the requested permit, provided that the Service—

- in consultation with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, is satisfied that the applicant's plans and facilities for transporting and maintaining the animal are adequate to provide for its health and well-being; and
- is satisfied that the applicant's education program is acceptable (i.e., a program is in place as a component of the proposed public display, the basic message of the program is accurate and consistent with the policies of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and the program includes accurate information about the life history and other aspects of the species).

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 have 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.M.