

Statement of Problem

Marine mammals are acoustic specialists.

We know *individual* animals can be adversely affected by exposure to anthropogenic sound.

Adverse effects of anthropogenic sound on marine mammal *populations* have not been scientifically demonstrated:

“No scientific studies have conclusively demonstrated a link between exposure to sound and adverse effects on a marine mammal *population*. These considerations have led to alternative assessments of the effects of sound on marine mammals. On the one hand, sound may represent only a second order effect on the conservation of marine mammal *populations*; on the other hand, what we have observed so far may be only the first early warnings or “tip of the iceberg” with respect to sound and marine mammals.” NRC 2005

INFORMATION NEEDS TO REDUCE UNCERTAINTY

- Prioritize and endorse basic and applied research recommendations
- Diversify funding and encourage cooperation among funding entities
- Establish a statutory and regulatory framework that protects animals while removing obstacles to research needed for conservation

Research Caucus Recommendations re Management

- Comprehensive management applies to all sound sources – “level playing field”
- Streamline regulatory processes to enable adding unregulated activities
- Focus regulatory effort on activities with greatest risks
- Consider effects of sound along with all other impacts
- Population level most important, but should consider individual takes