



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

31 August 2016

Mr. Timothy J. Van Norman, Chief
Branch of Permits, MS: IA
Division of Management Authority
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, Virginia 22041-3803

Re: Permit Application No. 02152C
(SeaWorld, LLC)

Dear Mr. Van Norman:

The Marine Mammal Commission (the 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 MMPA). SeaWorld, LLC (SeaWorld) is requesting authorization to take one non-releasable male Pacific walrus for the purpose of public display.

SeaWorld is requesting to permanently hold a non-releasable male Pacific walrus, Mitik, for the purpose of public display. Mitik was rescued as an abandoned calf near Barrow, Alaska, in June 2012. In October 2012, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) deemed him non-releasable after determining that Mitik did not demonstrate the skills and abilities needed to survive in the wild. Mitik was transferred to SeaWorld in 2014 for continued care, where he has remained. The authority under which Mitik is being held in captivity would change from section 109(h) to 104(c) of the MMPA. SeaWorld (1) is open to the public on a regularly scheduled basis with access that is not limited or restricted other than by charging an admission fee, (2) offers an educational program based on professionally recognized standards, and (3) holds Exhibitor's License 93-C-0069, issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture under the Animal Welfare Act. The Commission believes that the proposed activities are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and therefore recommends that FWS issue the permit, as requested. Kindly contact me if you have any questions concerning the Commission's recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca J. Lent".

Rebecca J. Lent, Ph.D.
Executive Director