

**MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION
4340 EAST-WEST HIGHWAY, ROOM 905
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20814**

10 June 2004

The Honorable Peter T. Young
Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources
Commission on Water Resources
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 130
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

Dear Mr. Young:

Thank you for copying the Marine Mammal Commission on your 11 May letter to the National Marine Fisheries Service formally requesting support and assistance to develop a cooperative agreement under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act. A Section 6 agreement would further conservation goals for several endangered marine species, including Hawaiian monk seals. We are delighted to learn of this important step and hope that the State and the Service can expeditiously complete an agreement. The Service currently has a limited amount of funding available for Section 6 agreements nationwide. The sooner Hawaii can complete its agreement and request funding, the more likely you will be in actually getting financial support for your programs.

The populations of monk seals, sea turtles, and other endangered marine species that inhabit the coastal waters and shorelines of Hawaii are both nationally and internationally significant. Their proper stewardship merits and requires close cooperation among government agencies at the local, state, and federal levels and the public. We believe the Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources can provide a fulcrum for such collaboration and that this agreement offers an opportunity to further the significant progress the Division has made in recent years in this direction. This is an especially appropriate time to develop such an agreement given that the National Marine Fisheries Service is expanding its focus in Hawaii by establishing a Regional Office (i.e., the new Pacific Islands Regional Office) and the growing presence of Hawaiian monk seals in the main Hawaiian Islands. The Marine Mammal Commission commends your staff, particularly Mr. William Devick and Dr. Jeffrey Walters, for pursuing this constructive step.

If there is anything we can do to help develop this agreement, please let us know.

Sincerely,



David Cottingham
Executive Director

cc: Ms. Laurie K. Allen
Mr. William Devick
Samuel Pooley, Ph.D.
Mr. William Robinson

**PHONE: (301) 504-0087
FAX: (301) 504-0099**