

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

28 October 2005

Mr. Peter T. Young
Chair, Board of Land and Natural Resources
Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 130
P.O. Box 62
Honolulu, HI 96809

Dear Peter:

On behalf of the Marine Mammal Commission, I would like to extend our appreciation to you and your staff—particularly Athline Clark—for your efforts to designate the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) Marine Refuge. Adoption of the rules designating this Refuge may be the most important marine conservation action taken by a federal or state agency since the establishment of the NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve in 2000. Indeed, the adopted Refuge rules and the precedent of strong protection that they set for the evolving NWHI national marine sanctuary may do as much or more to secure long-term protection of the NWHI ecosystem than the federal reserve designation of 2000. We can think of no area more deserving of the protection embodied in the state refuge than the nearshore waters of the NWHI.

We also thank you and your staff for your continuing efforts to protect Hawaiian monk seals and spinner dolphins in the main Hawaiian Islands. Although your staff may be small, its well-placed efforts on difficult issues involving the conservation of protected species and their ecosystems are an enormous contribution.

If the Marine Mammal Commission can help with any of your management challenges, we would be glad to do so. Once again, thank you and congratulations on all that you and your team have accomplished.

Sincerely,



David Cottingham
Executive Director