



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

15 December 2015

Ms. Jolie Harrison, Chief
Permits and Conservation Division
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225

Re: Permit Amendment Application No. 17157
(Stephen Tremble, Ph.D., Baylor University)

Dear Ms. Harrison:

The Marine Mammal Commission (the Commission), in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed the above-referenced permit amendment application with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (the MMPA). Dr. Trumble is seeking to amend permit 17157 that authorizes him to import, receive, possess, and export samples from eight mysticete species—the permit expires on 17 July 2017.

Dr. Trumble is authorized to import, receive, possess, and export earplugs from up to 25 each of blue, sei, minke, humpback, gray, bowhead, fin and sperm whales per year. All age classes and both sexes could be sampled. The samples would originate from various museums worldwide and bowhead collections in Barrow, Alaska. The purpose of the research is to (1) investigate the chronological accumulation of contaminant and hormone concentrations in individual whales and (2) determine individual- and population-level exposure to those contaminants and resulting hormone concentrations.

Dr. Trumble is proposing to (1) increase the number of earplugs¹ that could be imported, received, or exported from 25 to 100 individuals of each species per year and (2) import, receive, possess, and export baleen samples from those 100 blue and 100 fin whales to investigate contaminant and hormone concentrations between the two sample types. The Commission believes that the proposed amendment is consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and therefore recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service issue the permit amendment, provided that the current permit conditions remain in effect.

¹ Obtained during European whaling activities in the 1980s.

Ms. Jolie Harrison
15 December 2015
Page 2

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". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a distinct "Lent" at the end.

Rebecca J. Lent, Ph.D.
Executive Director