



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

May 9, 2016

Ms. Donna Wieting, Director
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
1315 East-West Hwy.
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Donna,

On behalf of all of us at the Marine Mammal Commission (the Commission), I want to thank you and your Division Chiefs for inviting the Commission staff to the Protected Resources Board meeting, May 3-5, 2016. The meeting provided an excellent opportunity for us to join NMFS' headquarters and regional staff to discuss our shared challenges in the science and conservation of marine mammals.

We are particularly grateful to Angie Somma, Jon Kurland, and Nicole LeBoeuf for reaching out to the Commission early in the planning process. We appreciated having the opportunity to add two items to the agenda, and to provide a presentation regarding effective bycatch management by the Take Reduction Teams, and the appropriate role of the regional fishery management councils in that process.

As you know, there were several important updates at this meeting in addressing major marine mammal issues, including streamlining the scientific research permit process and ensuring that key parameters such as potential biological removal levels are appropriately adjusted as stock assessments become more dated. We look forward to collaborating on the next steps on these and other issues, as well as continuing our ongoing dialogue regarding recovering marine mammal populations.

Again, thank you for including us at the Protected Resources Board meeting.

Sincerely,

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

Rebecca J. Lent, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: Eileen Sobeck, Assistant Administrator, NMFS
Samuel D. Rauch, III, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Affairs, NMFS