



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

24 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. 83954B
(University of California Santa Cruz)

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). University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) is requesting authorization to import, receive, and possess samples from polar bears for purposes of scientific research during a five-year period.

UCSC proposes to import, receive, and possess samples from polar bears taken legally in Canada. Samples would originate from live animals¹ that were collected by permitted researchers and dead stranded animals². The purpose is to create an improved reference genome for polar bears and investigate the genetic diversity and unique adaptations of polar bears. The Commission believes that the proposed activities are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and therefore recommends that the Fish and Wildlife Service 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

¹ Including blood and tissue samples.

² Including skin, hair, and bone.