



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

6 October 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 Amendment Application No. 77245B
(U.S. Geological Survey)

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 amendment application with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (the MMPA). U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is seeking to amend permit 77245B that authorizes it to conduct research on two captive polar bears¹ at the Oregon Zoo—the permit expires on 17 May 2021. Researchers are authorized to measure oxygen consumption via open-flow respirometry, acceleration via collar-mounted tri-axial accelerometers, and body composition via deuterated water administration and serial blood sampling on each bear. The purpose of the study is to estimate energy demands and better understand how polar bears in the wild are responding to loss of sea ice.

USGS is proposing to conduct the research on four new study bears, one at the Oregon Zoo and three at the San Diego Zoo. San Diego Zoo holds Exhibitor's License 93-C-0040² and its Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee has reviewed and approved the research protocols. The Commission believes that the proposed activities are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and therefore recommends that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issue the permit amendment, provided that the current permit conditions remain in effect.

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 One of which recently was euthanized due to presence of a liver tumor and overall declining health.

² Issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.