



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

13 March 2017

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 Application No. 20646
(Morgridge Institute for Research)

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 application with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (the MMPA). Morgridge Institute for Research (Morgridge) is requesting authorization to import, receive, possess, and export samples from cetaceans during a five-year period.

Morgridge proposes to import, receive, possess¹, and export samples from up to 12 individual cetaceans of 38 different species. Samples² would be obtained from (1) animals involved in permitted research activities and stranded and captive animals in the United States and abroad, (2) animals killed during subsistence hunting activities in the United States, and (3) animals killed incidental to legal fishery operations abroad. In addition, samples could be obtained from established frozen fibroblast cell banks. The objective is to establish and bank whale induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS cells) from fibroblasts and characterize cetacean iPS cells to better understand how developmental timing relates to species size. The Commission believes that the proposed activities are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and therefore recommends that the National Marine Fisheries 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 samples from an additional four individuals that are already in Morgridge's custody and were collected under a permit issued to the Southwest Fisheries Science Center. Custody of those samples would transfer to permit 20646 if issued.

² Including but not limited to skin, blubber, muscle, eye, and gonads.