



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

11 October 2017

Dr. Nature McGinn, ACA Permit Officer
Permit Office, Room 755
Division of Polar Programs
National Science Foundation
2415 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Dr. McGinn:

On 5 October 2017, the National Science Foundation (NSF) published a notice (82 Fed. Reg. 46535) requesting comments on a permit application from BBC Worldwide Americas, Inc. (BBC). BBC is seeking authorization under the Antarctic Conservation Act (the ACA) to conduct filming activities on Weddell seals in Antarctica. The Marine Mammal Commission (the Commission), in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed the permit request with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (the MMPA) and the ACA.

BBC proposes to film¹ eight female-pup pairs near McMurdo Sound, Antarctica, from October through December 2017 (see the take table). Non-target Weddell seals also could be harassed incidental to the filming activities. The footage would be used for the *Seven Worlds* television series. Permit 21486 issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) authorizes the filming activities. The Commission believes that the proposed activities are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and ACA and recommends that NSF issue the ACA permit, consistent with the timeframes and activities authorized under permit 21486 that was issued by NMFS.

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

cc: Amy Sloan, NMFS

¹ Filming would be conducted on the ice, underwater via divers, and using a drone. Vocalizations would be recorded as well.