



# MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

20 July 2018

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 Amendment Application No. 21217  
(Aaron Roberts, University of North Texas)

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 amendment application with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (the MMPA). Dr. Roberts is authorized to import, receive, and possess samples from harp and hooded seals during a five-year period—permit 21217 expires on 30 November 2022. The purpose is to assess changes in molecular biomarkers, immune suppression, hormone concentrations, and overall health associated with exposure to polybrominated diphenyl ethers.

Dr. Roberts proposes to increase the total number of samples to be imported during the five-year period from 30 each for harp and hooded seals to 60 each. Samples have been and would be obtained from permitted researchers in Canada. 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 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 "Peter O. Thomas".

Peter O. Thomas, Ph.D.,  
Executive Director