



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

12 July 2011

Mr. P. Michael Payne, Chief
Permits, Conservation, and Education Division
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Permit Application No. 16510
(Blank Park Zoo)

Dear Mr. Payne:

The Marine Mammal 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.

RECOMMENDATION

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service approve the requested permit, provided that the Service—

- in consultation with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, is satisfied that the applicant's plans and facilities for transporting and maintaining the animals meet the requirements established under the Animal Welfare Act and are adequate to provide for the animals' health and well-being; and
- is satisfied that the applicant's education program is acceptable (i.e., a program is in place as a component of the proposed public display, the basic message of the program is accurate and consistent with the policies of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and the program includes accurate information about the life history and other aspects of the species).

RATIONALE

Blank Park Zoo is requesting authorization to import up to five non-releasable harbor seals or California sea lions during a five-year period for public display purposes. The seals would include one female and one male harbor seal to be imported in Fall 2011 from the Marine Mammal Rescue Division of the Vancouver Aquarium, Vancouver, Canada. The Zoo (1) is open to the public on a regularly scheduled basis for a nominal fee, (2) offers an educational program based on professionally recognized standards, and (3) holds Exhibitor's License 42-C- 0168, issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Inspection Service under the Animal Welfare Act. The exhibit area that would house the animals currently is under construction but would be inspected and approved by the Animal and Plant Inspection Service before the seals are imported from Canada. In addition, the attending veterinarians from both facilities have certified that animal care during all stages of the Fall 2011 import would be adequate to ensure the well-being of the seals and all International Air Transport Association requirements would be met. Certifications would be

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provided prior to each future import.

The Commission believes that the activities for which it has recommended approval are consistent with the purposes and policies of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Please contact me if you have any questions concerning this recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy J. Ragen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'T'.

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: Barbara Kohn, D.V.M.