

MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION  
4340 East-West Highway, Room 700  
Bethesda, MD 20814-4447

27 February 2009

Mr. Timothy J. Van Norman  
Chief, Branch of Permits  
Division of Management Authority  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
4401 North Fairfax Drive  
Arlington, VA 22203

Re: Permit Application No. MA197043  
(Niladri Basu, Ph.D.)

Dear Mr. Van Norman:

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. We offer the following recommendation.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the Fish and Wildlife Service issue the requested permit, provided that—

- the Service determines that all samples to be imported were taken in accordance with the laws of the country of origin, and
- the applicant be required to obtain all necessary permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora before importing the samples.

### **BACKGROUND**

The applicant is requesting authorization to obtain and import annually for purposes of scientific research tissue samples (muscle, blood, fur, kidney, liver, and brain) taken from up to 250 polar bears (12 samples of each of these six tissues per bear). The applicant intends to obtain and import samples from polar bears taken in Canada, Greenland, Norway, and Russia by indigenous hunters as part of traditional community harvests and taken within permissible quotas, or by regional government biologists who have obtained the necessary government permits to take the samples. The applicant intends to use molecular and biochemical tools to develop indicators of early health effects in tissues of polar bears and to measure levels of chemical pollutants in the samples. The permit is requested for a five-year period.

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the requested permit be issued, provided that the Service determines that all samples to be imported were taken in accordance with


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the laws of the country of origin and provided that the applicant is required to obtain the necessary permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora before importing samples.

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 and other applicable laws.

Please contact me if you have any questions concerning this recommendation.

Sincerely,



Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.  
Executive Director