



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

14 July 2015

Mr. Timothy J. Van Norman, Chief
Branch of Permits, MS: IA
Division of Management Authority
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, Virginia 22041-3803

Re: Permit Application No. 59633B
(Melissa McKinney, Ph.D.,
University of Connecticut)

Dear Mr. Van Norman:

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). Dr. McKinney is requesting authorization to import, receive, possess, and export samples from polar bears and walrus during a five-year period.

Dr. McKinney proposes to import, receive, possess, and export tissue samples¹ from polar bears and walrus of either sex and any age class. Samples have been, and would continue to be, collected from subsistence hunted animals and during permitted scientific research activities in the United States, Canada, and Greenland/Denmark. The objectives are to determine body condition, diet, and contaminant concentrations and the effects of climate change on the health of the animals and their ecosystem. Any unused samples could be re-exported to the researchers or entities that provided the samples.

The Commission believes that the proposed activities are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA and therefore recommends that the Fish and Wildlife 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 Blubber, liver, kidney, muscle, skin, blood, and hair.