



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

6 August 2014

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. 40066B
(Spiegel TV GmbH)

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). Spiegel TV GmbH, a German filming company, proposes to film polar bears in October 2014.

Spiegel TV is requesting authorization to take up to 15 individual polar bears up to two times per day by Level B harassment during filming activities. Filming would occur during a 6-day period at the bone pile in Kaktovik and in the waters around Barter Island, Alaska. The filmmakers also could take still photographs of the bears. Up to two non-targeted polar bears could be disturbed incidental to the filming activities each day. Polar bears could be of either sex and any age. The applicant would use footage as part of a documentary on polar bears and climate change for a television show to be aired on the Second German Broadcasting Corporation and European Channel.

The filmmakers would film the bears from vehicles and small boats. The filmmakers have experience videotaping and photographing wildlife but not specifically polar bears. Therefore, local Inupiat guides would assist them during the activities. They would approach the bears slowly on land and would remain behind the viewing barriers and signs. If any bear changes its behavior, the filmmakers would move away from the bear. Although the researchers would film females with cubs, they would not separate the female and her cubs while on land or at sea. Spiegel TV also would abide by the Polar Bear Viewing Guidelines and is collaborating with the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), U.S. Geological Survey, and World Wildlife Foundation. Therefore, the Commission recommends that FWS issue the permit, as requested.

The Commission believes that the activities for which it has recommended approval are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA. 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