



# MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

7 August 2012

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. 100875  
(John Wise, Ph.D.,  
University of Southern Maine)

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. Dr. Wise is seeking to renew permit 100875 so that he can receive, import, and export samples from seven marine mammal species for purposes of scientific research. The renewed permit would be valid for five years.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the Fish and Wildlife Service issue the permit, but require Dr. Wise to maintain detailed records indicating the source of each sample, the circumstances under which it was collected, the researchers and associated institutions that receive cell lines, and the purpose of their research.

## **RATIONALE**

The take table in Dr. Wise's application indicates that he would obtain samples from 100 individuals of each species (25 each from adult males and females and juvenile males and females). The seven species include the walrus, polar bear, northern sea otter, dugong, West Indian manatee, Amazonian manatee, and West African manatee. The purpose of the proposed research is to (1) determine contaminant concentrations, genetic signatures, and pathogens in marine mammals and (2) establish a resource of marine mammal cell lines to investigate factors related to marine mammal health, which would give him a basis for comparing his results to human studies. Dr. Wise would obtain tissues from stranded animals; animals that die while in rehabilitation, animals in public display facilities, or captive research facilities; animals sampled by other permitted researchers; and animals killed during legal subsistence hunts. Frozen and formalin-fixed tissues would be collected from the same animals from which cell lines would be derived. Ideally, the samples would be taken from the bronchus, dermis, liver, kidney, and testes or ovary of each sampled animal. He would derive cell lines from fibroblasts and epithelial cultures and would store them at the University of Southern Maine. After obtaining the cell lines, he may transfer samples from them to other

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researchers, who conduct *bona fide* scientific research worldwide. The cell lines would not be sold for profit or used for commercial purposes.

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the Fish and Wildlife Service issue the permit, but require Dr. Wise to maintain detailed records indicating the source of each sample, the circumstances under which it was collected, the researchers and associated institutions that are sent cell lines, and the purpose of their research.

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 the Commission's recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy J. Ragen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.  
Executive Director