From: Sandra Smith
To: MakahDEIS.nwr@noaa.gov;
Subject: Attn: 2008 Makah DEIS
Date: Friday, May 09, 2008 7:34:18 PM

To Whom it May Concern;

I lived on the Olympic Peninsula for most of my life, and I know many members of the Makah tribe. I read about the upcoming decision regarding Makah whaling, and I felt compelled to voice my opinion.

The Makah are a vibrant people who have held on to many of their cultural traditions; whaling was one of the most essential aspects of traditional Makah culture, and the tribe insisted on keeping the right to whale when they negotiated with the United States government for treaty rights and their reservation.

Though I favor restriction of commercial whaling ventures that endanger vulnerable species, I strongly support the right of the Makah to take a small number of whales from their traditional waters. The tribe have been good stewards of the land; they seek to hunt whales to continue tribal traditions and strengthen their community.

The article that I read suggested that NOAA was considering several options. In my opinion this option makes sense:

2. Allow killing of four whales per year on average (a max of five per year) and up to 20 whales in a five-year period. Hunting would occur from December to the end of May. The maximum number of whales struck in any year would be seven, and the max struck and lost would be three.

I believe it is wise to set guidelines; I hope that the rules used will be fair to the tribe and will protect the whales from overexploitation.

I urge you to allow the Makah to hunt whales in accordance with their long tradition.

Sandra Smith