From: Alan Thomas
To: MakahDEIS.nwr@noaa.gov;
Subject: 2008 Makah DEIS
Date: Saturday, May 10, 2008 6:51:51 AM

Thanks for this opportunity to comment on the Makah Tribe's desire to resume whaling.

I favor Alternative 1 (No-action).

- While the tribe has a treaty right, the tribe's stated reasons for resuming their killing of gray whales are more than offset by the fact that they have not done so for more than one human generation. Few of the Makah now alive and able to participate in this activity have done so; the tribe has claimed no harm to their health or welfare because of this fact.

- Particular reference to "dietary" impact has been made by the tribe. It is difficult to see the adverse impact of foregoing ceremonial consumption of whale blubber. Had the tribe been living almost entirely off whale blubber for the past 30 years, their argument would make sense. However, they have not … and their claim of dietary necessity is ridiculous. If the tribe must eat whale blubber, they can consume drift whales provided by the agency as noted on page 2-21.

- Because of the time elapsed since the tribe killed whales on a regular basis, the Makah's claim that they seek to live in accordance with their culture is false.

- Tribal enforcement of whaling regulations is suspect at best. While current proceedings against tribal members who killed a gray whale recently are incomplete, news articles clearly demonstrate the tribe's reluctance to take action against its members in any meaningful way. Early promises of "swift action" proved to be false; more recently the tribe suggested dropping charges against the alleged and admitted killers of the whale.

- The tribe appears to have a commercial motive (sale of 'non edible' materials to non-tribe members)

- The proposed restriction of "sharing" to those with whom local residents have "familial, social, cultural, or economic ties" is meaningless. I could purchase whale products from a tribe member and create an "economic tie".

- That the Makah Department of Fisheries Management is to monitor the tribe's whaling activities is farcical. The tribe has demonstrated and inability and unwillingness to monitor and control its members quite recently.

With respect to other alternatives

- The number of whales allowed to be struck but not 'taken' is excessive in all instances.

- The tribe should pay … in advance … any and all costs associated with "a hunt observer, and for federal, tribal, state, and local law enforcement agents and resources (e.g. helicopters and boats) to monitor the hunt and manage and protest activities." Whaling is not an activity permitted to me or a vast majority of U.S. citizens; the costs associated with this activity should be borne by those who initiate the activity.

- That the tribe wishes to "apply the full range of knowledge associated with whale hunting…" is irrelevant. This is not a commercially or socially useful body of knowledge.

- Whatever "spiritual connection" to whaling is claimed, it has been lost over many years of non-whaling.

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