From: Bryony Angell
To: MakahDEIS.nwr@noaa.gov;
cc: Samantha Everett;
Subject: I oppose the Makah request for hunting of gray whale
Date: Monday, May 19, 2008 11:34:27 AM

Dear NOAA officials:

I write as a concerned citizen for Washington State's wildlife and environment. While I respect the right of the Makah to request a traditional whale hunting ceremony, I believe that such a tradition is no longer relevant to present day and the importance of protecting marine mammals off our coast.

A request to hunt Gray whale off Washington's coast is license to harass and kill a threatened species, and under the marine mammal protection act of our country, this hunting option doesn't exist. The only reason the Makah's request is being considered is because of the history of tradition. But many cruel and excessive traditions are now outlawed—such as the trade in parts of endangered and threatened species. The exemption for the Makah's request is absurd, and sets a dangerous precedent that tradition some how overrides conservation.

Granting hunting rights to a particular group of people effectively nullifies the very laws that are set up to protect marine mammals. What good are laws if they can be overlooked on occasion?

In today's environmental reality, marine mammals need all the protection they can get by rule of law. From global warming affecting food availability to destructive fishing practices in international waters, there are many hazards faced by marine mammals such as whales. As much as we can the US should present an example to the world in stewardship of the marine life off our coasts, and work with other international agencies to strengthen protections of our ocean waters and the life within them.

I do not agree that historic tradition outweighs the importance of protecting the whales that pass through our waters. Please turn down this request by the Makah.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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