From: Steven Thomson
To: MakahDEIS.nwr@noaa.gov;
Subject: 2008 Makah DEIS
Date: Saturday, May 10, 2008 9:37:00 PM

Steve Stone
NOAA Fisheries Northwest Region
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97232

PO Box 44376
Tacoma, WA 98448

Dear Mr. Stone,

I am writing today to submit my comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the proposal for Makah whaling regulations.

I am a professional cultural anthropologist, however my area of expertise is outside the northwest region, so I write as an informed and concerned citizen of the region with a particular and relevant set of comparative views. Through my colleagues at Pacific Lutheran University I have become more aware of the background and history of this situation, but the views presented in this letter are entirely my own.

Having reviewed the DEIS through the website, I feel strongly that, Alterative 2, the regulations proposed by the legitimate and representative authorities of the Makah Tribe, should be recognized and endorsed. The restrictions and regulations they propose appear to be reasonable and legitimate. It is incumbent on the US government to fulfill and support the exercise of the rights enshrined in treaties with sovereign nations. The efforts of the Makah to preserve and invigorate their traditions and community life should be commended and encouraged as enriching the diversity of the American experience. As clearly indicated, these cultural goals can be accommodated without endangering the viability of the gray whale populations and clear safe-guards are in place should such a condition arise.

I see no reason to support any of the more expansive alternative plans, numbers 3, 5, or 6, if they were not requested by the tribe at this time. The additional restrictions proposed in Alternative 4, while offering additional environmental protections, should not be endorsed because of significant impact it would have on the practicality and safety of the hunt. Given the limited number of incidents annually and the overall regard for the natural environment evidenced in Makah attitudes and practice, I see no need for these provisions. If possible, I would encourage dialog with the appropriate Makah authorities to adopt additional voluntary guidelines to acknowledge these concerns and outline appropriate techniques for mitigating these impacts without restricting whale hunting activities in these areas.

Sincerely yours,

Steven Thomson

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