From: Kimberly Christensen
To: MakahDEIS.nwr@noaa.gov;
Subject: 2008 Makah DEIS
Date: Wednesday, May 14, 2008 9:56:39 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

As a US citizen and resident of WA state, I urge you to uphold the Marine Mammal Protection Act and to proceed with the "no-action" option in regards to the Makah's application to hunt gray whales.

I understand what a delicate issue this is, and in general, believe that treaties with our Native American tribes should be upheld.

In this particular instance, I feel that the needs of the whales, whose numbers have already been greatly diminished by human activity, should supersede the desire of the tribe to hunt. Truly, there is no subsistence need to hunt whales. Plenty of nourishing food is available here in Washington state.

As for cultural needs, I believe that cultures must find ways to bring their people together, but that those activities also must evolve with the changes in our society's values and our environment's needs. Dog fighting, polygamous marriage, slavery, female genital mutilation, "honor" killings, and many other offensive but culturally binding activities have all been popular at one time and now are no longer acceptable to our people. I believe that the hunting of whales also falls into this category. In order for whales to survive as a species, those cultures, such as the Norwegians, Japanese and Makah, who have important history as whale hunters need to redefine themselves. While I don't want to reduce this dilemma to a simplistic answer, perhaps there is something to be learned from the gradual transition of safari hunting to photo-safaris as people begin to understand the devastation that hunting wreaks on game animals and their habitats in Africa.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Christensen
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