From: Cher Isbell
To: MakahDEIS.nwr@noaa.gov;
Subject: 2008 Makah DEIS
Date: Saturday, June 07, 2008 7:42:36 PM

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please accept our comments regarding the Makah Indian Tribe's appeal to recommence hunting Pacific gray whales in coastal waters off Washington State. After five Makah whalers illegally shot and harpooned a gray whale off Neah Bay in 2007, the defenseless animal gradually bled to death over nine hours. The Makah Nation dismissed all charges, provided the offenders violated no laws the following year. Federal prosecutors offered a plea deal that asked the tribal court to waive prosecution. As you know, the tribal judge ignored the federal plea deal, ordering the five whalers to instead stand trial in a sympathetic Makah courtroom.

In the 21st Century, no human being needs whale meat to survive - including the Makah Tribe, who until recently, mercifully left the gray whale unmolested for over 70 years. The "reinforcement of tribal identity" does not justify blatant slaughter. Whales are typically harpooned or blasted with high-powered rifles under the guise of "cultural" whaling. Holidays are observed with whaling contests and races. No celebration warrants animal suffering and death.

There is no rationale for "ceremonial and subsistence" whaling in the contemporary world. Please do not honor "treaty rights" to massacre whales. We urge you to deny the Makah Nation's proposal to legally kill whales under their treaty.

Thank you,
Cher Isbell