From: Domenech family
To: MakahDEIS.nwr@noaa.gov;
Subject: 2008 Makah DEIS
Date: Thursday, August 14, 2008 10:01:34 PM

Dear NOAA,

I am writing to ask you to consider Alternative 1, the No-action Alternative to the proposed Makah gray whale hunt. There are many reasons the Makah should not be allowed to violate the MMPA and hunt gray whales. First of all, gray whales, like many other whales, face many threats. Lack of food, ship strikes, pollution, and global warming, to name a few. With all the threats they face in today's world, it simply does not make sense to add another unnecessary threat. At the EIS hearing in Seattle, the NOAA representative admitted that the threats faced by global warming and its impact on the gray whales food supply had not been addressed.

Secondly, though the gray whale population appears to be stable, researchers who work with the gray whales in Mexico have reported low calf counts, fewer whales returning to breed and whales arriving at the breeding grounds very thin. None of these are good signs for the gray whale population and its uncertain future.

Instead of authorizing this hunt, the U.S. government should consider working with the Makah on alternatives to hunting gray whales. The Canadian govt. worked with some First Nations tribes by offering the tribes land and mining rights if they would agree to not hunt gray whales. If the U.S. government were to consider offering fishing rights, land or some other compensation, they may be able to convince the Makah not to hunt at all. It would undoubtedly save the government money, as the cost of preparing this EIS, as well as the cost of law enforcement if the hunt does actually take place, must be quite high.

The humane aspect of the hunt must also be considered. Gray whales are gentle and accustomed to humans and boats. Many of these whales have been around whale watch boats most of their lives and have no fear of humans or boats. In this day and age, there is no reason for the Makah to kill whales. Since most of the last gray whale the Makah killed was not used in any way, subsistence in not a reason. Cultural traditions can be honored without actual killing, as many of the other tribes in the area have shown.

Please consider the No-action Alternative as the right alternative.

Sincerely,

Connie Domenech
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Friday Harbor, WA 98250