



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dr. Val Veirs
Jenny L. Atkinson
The Whale Museum
PO Box 945
62 First Street N
Friday Harbor, Washington 98250

DEC 06 2010

Dear Dr. Veirs and Ms. Atkinson:

We received your public comment letter dated November 30, 2010 requesting public hearings and an extension of the public comment period in response to an application for an amendment to Permit No. 781-1824-01.

The application to which you refer, was received on March 31, 2010 and was considered complete on October 07, 2010 after receipt of additional information. A notice of receipt (NOR) of the application was published in the Federal Register (FR) on November 09, 2010, and the application has been available for public comment for 30 days as required by regulation. Prior to publishing the NOR, a Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment which evaluates the requested actions was prepared (as stated in the NOR) and is enclosed for your review.

Please be advised that this activity has previously been considered. In 2008, an amendment to Permit No. 532-1822-02 was issued authorizing dart tagging of six Southern Resident Killer Whales annually. This action was subject to the standard review process, and no substantive public comments were received. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) after an analysis of the proposed action.

Consideration was given to all parties involved and a decision was made to extend the public comment period an additional two weeks. The FR notice for this will publish on December 08, 2010, and the extended comment period will close on December 23, 2010. A decision has been made that public hearings are not warranted for this action.

Please contact Laura Morse or Amy Sloan of my office with any questions regarding the content of this letter, (301) 713-2289.

Sincerely,

P. Michael Payne
Chief, Permits, Conservation
and Education Division
Office of Protected Resources

Enclosure



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