

Date: _____

Assistant Regional Administrator
Protected Resources Division
Northwest Regional Office
National Marine Fisheries Service
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115

RE: Docket No. 070821475-81493-01, RIN 0648-AV15 – Protective Regulations for Killer Whales in the Northwest Region Under the Endangered Species Act Marine Mammal Protection Act

Dear Assistant Regional Administrator:

I would like to offer my comments regarding the proposed new regulations in this docket.

I believe the Pacific Whale Watching Association embraces the true protection of the Southern Resident Killer Whales of which public education is an integral part. I agree with an advocate for their positions that:

1) The current science does not support doubling the distance from the killer whales from 100 yards to 200 yards. Under the existing laws the number of Southern Resident Killer Whales has been increasing for many years, there are more today than there were 10 years ago. Please maintain and enforce the 100 yard protection zone around the whales as prescribed in the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

2) The current quarter mile voluntary zone along San Juan Island and the half mile bubble around Lime Kiln Lighthouse has worked well and I support making this a boat free zone, when whales are present, year round. The proposed half mile “no-go zone” from May through September (even when whales are not in the area) is excessive and will not add to protection of the whales. Please codify the ¼ mile “no-go zone” off San Juan Island from Mitchell Pt. to Eagle Pt. and ½ mile bubble from Lime Kiln Lighthouse when whales are present.

The educational benefit to the general public from the whale watching industry has been well documented. Doubling the viewing distance would greatly diminish the effectiveness of this education.

The protection of the Southern Resident Killer Whales is of the utmost importance to us all. I am concerned that we are not doing the hard work of addressing contaminants in the food supply chain and simply going after the only visible target.

Thank you for including my comments in the rulemaking process.

Sincerely,

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____