



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

6 October 2014

Ms. Jolie Harrison, Chief
Permits and Conservation Division
National Marine Fisheries Service
Office of Protected Resources
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Harrison:

The Marine Mammal Commission (the Commission), in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed the San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority's (SFBAWETA) application seeking authorization under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act to take marine mammals by harassment. The taking would be incidental to pile driving and removal in association with construction of its Central Bay Operations and Maintenance Facility in Alameda, California. The Commission also has reviewed the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) 17 September 2014 notice (79 Fed. Reg. 55749) announcing receipt of the application and proposing to issue the authorization, subject to certain conditions.

Background

SFBAWETA plans to remove and install piles during construction of its new operations and maintenance facility. Operators would remove up to 35 12-in concrete piles using a vibratory hammer or direct pull. They also would install up to 61 18- to 30-in steel piles using an impact hammer and 24 18-in plastic piles using a vibratory hammer. In-water activities would occur during a 12-day period from 1 August–30 November 2015 and would be limited to daylight hours.

NMFS preliminarily has determined that, at most, the proposed activities temporarily would modify the behavior of small numbers of harbor seals and California sea lions. It also anticipates that any impact on the affected species and stocks would be negligible. NMFS does not anticipate any take of marine mammals by death or serious injury and believes that the potential for temporary or permanent hearing impairment would be at the least practicable level because of the proposed mitigation and monitoring measures. Those measures include—

- conducting empirical in-water measurements of the impact driving of steel piles and the vibratory driving of plastic piles and adjusting the exclusion and disturbance zones (based on Level A and B harassment, respectively), if necessary;
- using a sound attenuation device (i.e., bubble curtain) during impact pile driving;
- using soft-start, delay, and shut-down procedures;
- using one land-based protected species observer to monitor the harassment zones for 30 minutes before, during, and for 30 minutes after pile-driving and -removal activities;

- reporting injured and dead marine mammals to NMFS and the local stranding network using NMFS's phased approach and suspending activities, if appropriate; and
- submitting weekly monitoring reports and a final report.

In-situ sound measurements and in-season zone adjustments

Accurate characterization of the sizes of the exclusion and disturbance zones is critical for implementing mitigation measures and estimating the numbers of marine mammals taken. In the past, the Commission has recommended a rapid analysis of the in-situ sound source verification data to ensure that exclusion zones are the appropriate size. However, in at least one instance, rapid turnaround has resulted in errors, as occurred with ION's measurements of source levels during its 2012 in-ice survey. In that case, the size of the exclusion zone was decreased from the modeled zone using erroneous field-report results. The error was not discovered until the end of the field season when it was determined that the in-season adjustments resulted in unauthorized Level A harassment takes of bowhead whales. In addition, for the proposed authorization, SFBAWETA would be conducting acoustic monitoring for only the first pile of each type/size (e.g., once for impact driving of the 30-in steel pile¹, once for vibratory driving of the 18-in plastic pile). Variability in the source levels produced by the same type/size of pile in the same environment can be quite large. Since the purpose of verification is to ensure protection of marine mammals and source level variability would not be determined because data for only one pile of each type/size would be collected for the proposed authorization, NMFS should allow only for in-season increases (not decreases) in the sizes of exclusion and/or disturbance zones. Therefore, the Commission recommends that NMFS only authorize in-season adjustments in the sizes of the exclusion and/or disturbance zones if the size(s) of the estimated zones are determined to be too small.

The Commission hopes its comments are useful. Please contact me if you have questions regarding the Commission's recommendation.

Sincerely,



Rebecca J. Lent, Ph.D.
Executive Director

¹ SFBAWETA may not conduct measurements for smaller size piles of the same type and, thus, will use the zone based on the larger pile size.



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Preserve Alameda seals' safe space

1 message

AskIsadora@aol.com <AskIsadora@aol.com>

Wed, Oct 15, 2014 at 1:02 PM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

Please make sure that a haul-out spot for our seals is provided, old or new. Why make life more difficult for these charming creatures?

Isadora Alman, MFT

www.askisadora.com

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/sex-sociability>



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

The Level B IHA request by WETA

1 message

Dj Agnew <djagnew1@gmail.com>

Fri, Sep 26, 2014 at 12:08 AM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

Summary: I oppose granting their request to harass the harbor seals in order to remove them and construct a dock for human use. More to the point I oppose removal of the present space and haul-in ramps used by the harbor seals for their breeding and natal periods unless at least similar space and capabilities are established adjacent to or near the present space that can be used as a haul-in area.

Reasoning: Humans have done too much harm already to the animal life by filling in the San Francisco Bay itself, removing natural areas surrounding the waters, and altering the natural landscape and balance. It's time to stop those practices and at the least provide adequate substitutes to permit the return to a shared environment. As I understand it this is now the only mid-bay haul-in area left that can be used by the harbor seals to continue their life cycles. No wonder they are using it. If we really want/need that space for our purposes, we must provide them a viable alternative.

Should you need anything more from me, let me know.



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

WETA Alameda IHA application comment

Richard Bangert <alamedaptenviro-2013@yahoo.com>

Sun, Sep 28, 2014 at 2:31 PM

Reply-To: Richard Bangert <alamedaptenviro-2013@yahoo.com>

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

The description of the impact on the harbor seals that frequent the San Francisco Bay Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) Central Bay Operations Facility-Alameda project site is inadequate. It fails to identify the existing dock as habitat used by the seals as a haul-out now and for many years. While an abandoned dock may not be a traditional haul-out, it has come to be relied upon by the seals nonetheless. In the spring of 2014 a harbor seal pup was born in the immediate vicinity and was seen being nursed by its mother on the dock (see story in the Alameda Point Environmental Report link).

The Inner Harbor of Alameda Point is a quiet marine habitat with very little marine traffic, buffered by a mile-long breakwater. This has made it attractive as a resting area for more than a dozen harbor seals.

WETA cites Breakwater Island further out in the Alameda Point Channel as the only regular haul-out site. However, the data relied on for this assertion is from 16 years ago and stale. Harbor seals do indeed haul-out on Breakwater Island from time to time, but not on the same consistent basis witnessed by local residents at the WETA project site since the Navy ceased operations at Alameda Point in 1997. Furthermore, no data has been produced that documents harbor seal birthing at Alameda Point's Breakwater Island.

WETA implies that the old dock only became popular with harbor seals when part of the dock collapsed into the water a few years ago, which created a greater sense of safety for the seals. It is conjecture as to when the seals began frequenting the project site. No scientific data exists showing when harbor seals began frequenting the Alameda Point Inner Harbor. We do know that the Navy's recreational dock area had more than one dock, all of which has gone through stages of deterioration and may have served, from time to time, as a haul-out. Massive wooden timbers have been brought in by the tides and lodged against the old dock and served as a convenient haul-out for the harbor seals (see Vimeo video links). Some of these timbers had been moored to the old dock by unknown parties using black polypropylene rope. The timbers serving as haul-out shown in the videos became unmoored from the old dock earlier this year and drifted to the nearby shore.

There is more than adequate space in the Inner Harbor for WETA to construct a floating anchored platform to serve as a seal haul-out and mitigation for the loss of the existing haul-out. A new haul-out is not too much to ask in return for the loss of habitat and the daily disturbance brought about the exiting and entry of as many as 11 ferries throughout the day, once the facility is in operation. Please impose additional mitigation measures for the loss of a harbor seal haul-out.

<http://alamedapointenvironmentalreport.wordpress.com/2014/09/22/ferry-agency-seeks-harbor-seal-harassment-permit/>

<http://alamedasun.com/sites/default/files/print-fronts/Page%2001%20092514%20Front.pdf>

<https://vimeo.com/88454990>

<https://vimeo.com/83212516>

Richard Bangert
Alameda, CA



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Alameda Harbor Seals

1 message

Gordon Barr <gbarr@digitalspark.net>

Thu, Oct 9, 2014 at 2:43 PM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

An article recently published in the Alameda Sun brought to my attention the plight of our local Harbor Seals here in Alameda, CA. These seals are a beloved local attraction, an educational opportunity for our children, and an important part of our marine ecosystem.

I request that you require WETA to build a suitable haul-out site prior to the destruction of their present haul-out, and that all efforts are made to avoid disturbing these federally protected marine mammals.

Thank you for your time

Gordon Barr
2137 Otis Dr, Alameda, CA



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Alameda harbor seals

1 message

Joan Stebbins <jonestebbins@me.com>

Thu, Oct 9, 2014 at 1:56 PM

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

Hello

I am writing to implore you to rethink harassing and displacing our harbor seals, here in Alameda. The current proposal makes no provision for providing a new haul out to mitigate the loss of their breeding area. We love our seals!! Please don't destroy yet another wild life breeding ground. The very least that I feel should be done is provide an alternative space for them. I am saddened and disgusted by the idea of harassing and starving them out to get them to move.

Please consider my comments

Thank you

Joan Stebbins
Alameda resident and business owner

[415.819.4924](tel:415.819.4924) / jonestebbins@mac.com

Honey
2516 Santa Clara Ave
Alameda, California 94501
www.honeyalameda.com



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Harbor Seals at Alameda Point, CA

1 message

Lisa Baker <manopanthea@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: Lisa Baker <manopanthea@yahoo.com>
To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>
Cc: "editor@alamedasun.com" <editor@alamedasun.com>

Thu, Oct 9, 2014 at 7:12 PM

Dear National Marine Fisheries Service, Conservation Division: I am a long-time Alameda resident, and I often walk and bicycle all around our island in San Francisco Bay. I am very concerned about the proposed WETA project at Alameda Point and the effect it will have on the small colony of Harbor Seals that haul out nearby. The fact that we even have a colony of seals on our island is amazing, and to endanger this small group is to endanger the greater ecosystem of the bay. People have taken over virtually all of the shoreline, and these little marine mammals are adapting to the human presence by using our old docks and structures to rest and nurse their young. And now we plan to take that small site away from them?? I worry that the "limited harassment" of the project will not be limited at all, but will permanently drive the seals away. The seals were here in the bay long before we were, and, at the very least, WETA should provide a new haul-out site for the seals to replace the one that will be destroyed.

Lisa Haderlie Baker, Alameda



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Alameda Harbor Seals

1 message

Patsy Baer <2baers@att.net>

Thu, Oct 9, 2014 at 7:53 PM

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

The Harbor Seals who are being displaced by the WETA project in Alameda, California deserve more consideration than they are apparently getting. I feel strongly that the builder be required to provide a permanent, peaceful place for them rest and breed. Animals should not have to live at the mercy of humans.

Patricia Baer



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Disruption to Alameda Point Harbor Seal Haul Out

1 message

Rachel Campos <rcampos@alumni.haas.org>

Thu, Oct 9, 2014 at 7:59 PM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

Ms. Harrison,

I understand you are currently reviewing an application from WETA in regards to disruption to a known Harbor Seal haul out at Alameda Point.

I am writing to request that you require WETA to provide a solution to this important loss of habitat for the Harbor Seals. I visit that part of Alameda near daily and am constantly monitoring the activities of the seals. In the winter months the numbers that use the pier that WETA is scheduled to demolish can reach up to 15 with the same seals returning year after year. This past spring there were at least two pups who were being nursed on that pier and know the area as their home.

From what I've been able to gather, seals tend to return to the same haul out so I'm concerned that the destruction of the haul out that I've personally witnessed be used for at least the past four years will be significantly disruptive to their lives. I also understand that the Harbor Seals and their haul outs are federally protected so I'm confused as to how WETA can destroy their habitat.

As a frequent paddler I'm familiar with the terrain in the area and there is not another low traffic, low clearance haul out, the seals can use during all tide levels.

I hope you will consider the matter carefully and take the appropriate steps to protect the wildlife as they are a treasured part of the Alameda community.

Thank you,
Rachel Campos de Ivanov



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Harbor Seals

1 message

Sandy Keh <kehcat@yahoo.com>

Thu, Oct 9, 2014 at 11:42 AM

Reply-To: Sandy Keh <kehcat@yahoo.com>

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

Dear Sir,

I would like to ask you to reconsider destroying the seals' haul-out site in Alameda. Please let the seals stay as they are. We would be very disappointed if you disrupt them.

We need more park land in Alameda not less. Nature here is very important to us and part of the reason why we like living here.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sandy Keh



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

harbor seals need a haulout

1 message

Mark Klein <markk2000@comcast.net>

Fri, Oct 10, 2014 at 10:34 PM

To: NOAA <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

I am a resident of Alameda and wanted to comment on the current plan for a ferry facility on Alameda point. I am particularly upset that there is no accommodation for the harbor seals who have been using the old dock as a haulout, especially during pupping season. (FYI, I worked several years on animal care crew at The Marine Mammal Center, taking care of harbor seal pups, so I have a special concern for these charismatic animals.)

I often visit the old dock just to watch the seals' activity, such as in [this video](#) I made last March, and have met other people who stop by to admire the animals. It is a good place to see these animals without having to travel far, and enhances the area much like the sea lions do in San Francisco.

More importantly, the harbor seals need the haulout, and some no doubt will be returning in pupping season and be stressed out to find it gone. It seems to me that a haulout for seals could easily be integrated into the master plan.

Respectfully,

Mark Klein



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Alameda harbor seals

1 message

Matt Va. Alstyne <matt.vanalstyne@gmail.com>

Fri, Oct 10, 2014 at 12:21 AM

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

Please do not approve the "harassment permit". It is so rare, even living so close to the bay, to see any sort of wildlife that to dissuade it from resting nearby would be egregious.

Sent from my iPhone



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Alameda Point Ferry Maintenance and Operations Facility

1 message

Mike Gerhart <gerhart86@sbcglobal.net>

Fri, Oct 10, 2014 at 11:43 AM

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

Ms. Harrison,

I am writing to comment on the matter of permit approval that WETA applying for. I support the issuing of the permit. The jobs that the facility will provide will be an asset to the city of Alameda. The harbor seals will find other areas to occupy.

Thank you,
Mike Gerhart
Alameda



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Alameda Point/WETA destruction

1 message

Keith Nealy <keith.nealy@gmail.com>

Sat, Oct 11, 2014 at 8:26 PM

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

I am opposed to WETA's planned permanent destruction of harbor seal haul outs for ferry maintenance at Alameda Point. I'd rather not have it there at all, but at the least WETA should be required to provide for seal haul outs.

Keith Nealy
1540 Linden St
Alameda CA 94501

Sent from my iPhone



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

seals

1 message

nancy sabbatini <casab@comcast.net>

Sat, Oct 11, 2014 at 9:40 AM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

Save our seals! There must be some way to compromise on this. The seal's habitat is endangered with the WETA proposal. Please reconsider.



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Saving the Seals

1 message

william deichman <wdeichman2002@yahoo.com>

Sat, Oct 11, 2014 at 5:58 PM

Reply-To: **william deichman** <wdeichman2002@yahoo.com>

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

Cc: **William Deichman** <wdeichman2002@yahoo.com>

I am sending you this email to implore your thoughtful denial of WETA's request to harass our harbor seals. Protection of such sea life is in keeping with the values of our island city. As an alternative, I suggest relocation of the proposed ferry maintenance and operations facility to the end of Oriskany Ave. on Alameda Point at the existing NRC Environmental Services space in a lease buy-out or in a nearby adjacency. This location makes for easy access to and from the ferry facility and leaves our precious seals in peace. If this is not an option, then either relocate or build a haul out in the open bay near the proposed new facility site. There are 8 existing pylons which a raft-like haul out could easily be anchored to. This does not abandon our seals, it simply relocates their activity. Please consider my suggestions in the interest of our harbor seals whose occupancy of the existing site long predates the interest of the WETA. Thank you



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Alameda Point: Save the existing seal habitat

1 message

amw amw <amw.amw2@gmail.com>

Sun, Oct 12, 2014 at 2:07 AM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

I do not believe WETA should be allowed to work near the existing seal habitat. Please vote to deny the temporary harassment permit.

thank you,

AM Walsh
911 Chestnut St
Alameda, CA 94501



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Construction of the ferry maintenance facility at Alameda Point

1 message

Eric and Lauren <eric_lauren@comcast.net>

Sun, Oct 12, 2014 at 12:26 AM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

Dear Sir or Madam,

Are you aware that the proposed construction will permanently destroy a Harbor Seal haul out? A mother has been spotted there nursing a pup. Harbor seals return to these places regularly, to destroy them would be to severely impact marine mammal habitat.

Please do not allow this to happen.

Sincerely,

Eric Strimling

407 Haight Ave

Alameda, CA 94501





Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

WETA Permit for Alameda Point Ferry Facility

1 message

hbeerose <hbeerose@yahoo.com>

Sun, Oct 12, 2014 at 10:30 PM

Reply-To: hbeerose <hbeerose@yahoo.com>

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>, "jolie.harrison@noaa.gov" <jolie.harrison@noaa.gov>

October 12, 2014

Ms. Jolie Harrison, Chief
NOAA - National Marine Fisheries Service
Permits and Conservation Division
Office of Protected Resources
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225

Re: Water Emergency Transportation Authority's Alameda Point Permit Application

Dear Ms. Harrison

WETA has applied for a permit regarding the harassment of harbor seals during demolition and construction of a new facility in Alameda, California.

I go to this location at least every other day and this is what I have observed. For many years harbor seals have had a haul out at an old dock at the exact location that WETA is going to build their facility. I have seen as many as 15 there at one time, including mothers with nursing pups. Around the end of May the part of the pier they used became detached from the adjoining pier. Coincidentally this happened at the same time that I noticed personnel involved in the WETA project appearing in the area. There were four separate sections of the pier and it seems improbable that they all became detached at the same time (we did not have any unusual weather or tides during this time). Some people have said the detachment of the dock was deliberate, but the truth is, we will probably never know. A few seals continued to use the other pier but have a difficult time getting on it but can with some effort because part of it slopes into the water. I did not see more than four seals there at a time. A few days after the original haul out pier detached some boards and other debris started to appear which prevent the seals from being able to use the remaining pier although I have seen one seal there since this happened. This pier floats and is never below water level so obviously someone deliberately put the debris there. The items left on the pier change often and are getting larger. With my binoculars I can see that some of the wooden planks have sharp metal objects pointing upward which would inflict wounds on seals if they tried to haul out there as some had been doing. The only way this would have been done is by someone with a boat. The seals are still in the area because I see them in the water almost every time I go there.

WETA has applied for a Level B Incidental Harassment Authorization Permit addressing shaking and noise due to construction during pile driving/removal and temporary loss of foraging habitat causing disruption of their behavioral patterns. Apparently, the fisheries service's preliminary conclusion sees no

significant impact on the seals in light of the acoustical mitigation measures it worked out with WETA which includes gradual startups to demolition and dock construction work, a sound curtain and NMFS approved biological monitors.

It seems strange to me that WETA doesn't acknowledge that the entire haul out will no longer exist, making all these other issues of their current permit request irrelevant.

I used to love watching the seals there and it makes me so sad to see them looking for a place to haul out. I know there are laws protecting these sites but don't know if anyone will care enough to ensure that they will still have a haul out site there. But I know I had to try to let someone know what has been going on or I would regret not using my voice for those who are voiceless.

Sincerely,

Holly Rose
815 Lincoln Avenue, Apt. B
Alameda, CA 94501-3492
hbeerose@yahoo.com



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Seals in Alameda

1 message

Penelope Gordon <pegordon@1plug.com>

Sun, Oct 12, 2014 at 12:52 AM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

While I appreciate the need for a ferry maintenance facility in proximity to Alameda and Oakland, I am dismayed that a long-term accommodation has not been made to allow the currently resident harbor seals to continue to thrive in their homestead adjacent to Enterprise Park and the Bay Trail. One of the reasons I chose to buy a home on Alameda 16 years ago was unique character of the Island and its position in the Bay coexisting with a gradually recovering marine ecosystem.

Thank you in advance for giving consideration to the needs of the harbor seals.

Regards,
Penelope Gordon

--

Penelope Everall Gordon
pegordon@1plug.com
blog.nutriate.com/cloud
@Nutriate



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Speaking up for Seals in Alameda

1 message

Abigail Rauber <abigail.rauber@gmail.com>

Mon, Oct 13, 2014 at 12:48 PM

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

WETA,

It produced tears as I read that our loved seals are in danger of having their homes destroyed and rid of. If plans must go ahead to work on the ferry maintenance and operations facility then a thought out plan must be executed putting the seals home as first priority. We can not keep taking the homes away from animals just because we are stronger and have more power than they do. They can not speak up for themselves so it has to be us "the residence" to do so. I am not in favor of the building of a new site but if it does go ahead against many of our wishes then a new mitigation site for the seals close by must be built first. Taking seals away from Alameda when they chose to live here is unfair to them. Why should we take their rights and their home away? They want to live on this Island just as we do, so we must do so in harmony side by side. Twenty seals is a large number to consider, and even if we were talking about two or three, my opinion would stand the same.

I would like Alameda to maintain its treasures so my children can grow up to see the beauty in the landscape and marine life.

Please forward my comments on to Jolie Harrison and the correct people in order to prevent such horrors taking place on our Island.

Thanks listening to us.

Abby



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Harbor Seals- Alameda Point

1 message

Robert Rivers <robertrivers2005@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: Robert Rivers <robertrivers2005@yahoo.com>
To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

Tue, Oct 14, 2014 at 2:47 PM

Dear Sirs ,

I would like to comment on WETA development at Alameda Point
in Alameda , CA.

According to reports ,WETA plans to build a ferry maintenance and operations facility
that will destroy a haul out site for local Harbor seals.

I ask that some accomodation be made for the seals.

Thank You ,
Robert Ferrell



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Harbor Seal Habitat Destruction at Alameda Point

1 message

Yulian Ivanov <yulianivanov@yahoo.com>

Tue, Oct 14, 2014 at 4:07 PM

Reply-To: Yulian Ivanov <yulianivanov@yahoo.com>

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

Ms. Harrison

I am writing regarding the WETA permit to destroy a harbor seal haul out at Alameda Point. This herd has enjoyed quiet, peaceful waters for many years. I have personally been observing a group as large as 15-20 over the past 4 winters.

The habitat for this federally protected species has already been significantly damaged. Earlier this year, half of the pier that they use was mysteriously destroyed without getting the appropriate permits. This blog post from earlier this year illustrates the before and after.

<http://islesay.wordpress.com/2014/05/25/d-for-displaced-a-harbor-seal-mystery/>

I am very concerned about where these seals will go if and when WETA tears down the dock completely. I hope you will take the right measures to protect these animals and provide an alternate habitat in the area.

Thank you,

Yulian Ivanov
Alameda, CA



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

WETA Ferry Facility - and Alameda, CA OUR harbor seals

1 message

Michelle Rowe <michrowe@gmail.com>

Tue, Oct 14, 2014 at 10:59 PM

Reply-To: MichRowe@gmail.com

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

Hello,

I am writing to you in regard to the WETA ferry facility at Alameda Point--- and their plans to displace the winter haul out that is home to over 15 harbor seals.

Please provide an alternative habitat for our our beautiful sea mammals who are SO important to Alameda citizens.

Sincerely,

Michelle Rowe (Alameda resident since 2001)

527 Central Avenue

Alameda, CA 94501

510 521 7752

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email michrowe@gmail.com

mobile [415 518 0361](tel:4155180361)

Skype MLRowe415



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Alameda Seals

1 message

Chris Kanbergs <midchris@yahoo.com>

Wed, Oct 15, 2014 at 1:00 PM

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

I'm concerned that the seals will lose in this battle. Do you really think it is right to harass them. I don't. What are we teaching our children who really enjoy seeing the seals on our community shore. It's ok to harass when you have the money to back your redesign the plans.

Christine Kanbergs,
littlecrumbles.com



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Protect Alameda Point Seals

1 message

Elisabeth <ekvanhouten@gmail.com>

Wed, Oct 15, 2014 at 11:04 AM

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

Please protect Alameda Point Seals. Block the removal of the area where they get out if the water and take care of their pups.

Thank you.

Elisabeth van Houten

[510-227-6224](tel:510-227-6224)



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Harbor Seals at Alameda Point, Alameda, CA

1 message

Nancy Lee <nancy11@yahoo.com>

Wed, Oct 15, 2014 at 1:33 PM

Reply-To: Nancy Lee <nancy11@yahoo.com>

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

Hello,

I am writing in regard to the proposed construction plans of the ferry maintenance facility at Alameda Point. As an Alameda resident, I am concerned about the potential negative impact on the colony of harbor seals that use the current dock. Please ensure that construction takes into account the needs of this colony and works to ensure the safety and continued availability of their habitat.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Nancy Lee
1430 Mound St.
Alameda, CA 94501



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Alameda's harbor seal haul-out

1 message

theyildirims@aol.com <theyildirims@aol.com>

Wed, Oct 15, 2014 at 11:06 AM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

Good morning,

I'm writing to ask that you deny the request to remove the harbor seal haul-out/platform in Alameda, CA (San Francisco Bay)

So many things happen in this little town without people's awareness, and this is one of them. These are magnificent, and, in our area, rare marine mammals and we are begging you to use your power to protect this resting/breeding ground for them.

Please, please, please, deny the permit to bother them with noise and to remove their haul out. If it is at all within your power I urge you to use it for the good of the animals.

Respectfully,

Yvonne Yildirim
Alameda CA



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

In regards to IHA and WETA permits

1 message

peacefuljourneys <peacefuljourneys@earthlink.net>
Reply-To: peacefuljourneys <peacefuljourneys@earthlink.net>
To: itp.guan@noaa.gov
Cc: prettybird2244@gmail.com

Wed, Oct 15, 2014 at 11:34 AM

To whom it May concern;

Please take in consideration that a life source has a habit in the selected area already. Please protect there sustainability to thrive and raise their youth. The harbor seals have a right to have space and we have to protect their right.

A plea to help the harbor seals at alameda point.

Jessica Catano

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S™II Skyrocket™ an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone.



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Please save the Alameda Harbor Seals

1 message

Holly Deman <hollysskincare@icloud.com>

Wed, Oct 15, 2014 at 5:36 PM

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

To whom it May concern;

Please take in consideration that a life source has a habitat in the selected area already. Please protect there sustainability to thrive and raise their young. The harbor seals have a right to have space and we have to protect their right.

A plea to help the harbor seals at alameda point.

Sincerely,
Holly Deman Pucci



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Please save the Alameda Harbor Seals

1 message

Holly <holly.deman@gmail.com>

Wed, Oct 15, 2014 at 5:42 PM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

To whom it May concern;

Please take in consideration that a life source has a habitat in the selected area already. Please protect there sustainability to thrive and raise their young. The harbor seals have a right to have space and we have to protect their right.

A plea to help the harbor seals at alameda point.

Sincerely,
Holly Deman Pucci



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Seals at Alameda Point

1 message

violet grayson <graysonschultz@comcast.net>

Wed, Oct 15, 2014 at 6:56 PM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

Hello,

In the October 9, 2014, issue of The Alameda Sun, a front page story alerted the citizens of Alameda to the fact that Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) wants to displace the seals that have been "hauling out" on an old pier at Alameda Point. WETA wants to tear down the pier to build their ferry maintenance facility, but hasn't made any provisions for the seals. I find that intolerable and unacceptable and am opposed to the issuance of a harassment permit.

At Pier 39, San Francisco set out rafts for the seals. Can't WETA do something like that or at least build a little dock while they're building their big facility instead of just taking away the seals' place? Surely, there's an alternative to harassing the seals so that WETA can have a facility.

When the Alameda Naval Air Station closed, the runways where the least terns had chosen to build their nests were protected so that the least terns could return each year and lay their eggs. We're an island. Wildlife is important to us. We care about it. The least terns and the seals can't speak for themselves.

Please don't issue the harassment permit.

Thank you.

Violet Grayson

1830 Santa Clara Ave., Apt. A

Alameda CA 94501



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Alameda Point; Alameda Harbor Seals

1 message

Kimberly Buckingham <kimberlybuckingham@sbcglobal.net>

Wed, Oct 15, 2014 at 9:37 PM

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

Hi,

I'm writing about the Ferry Project slated for next year, 2015, at Alameda Point.

I am supportive of the project in general and supportive of our Ferry system; however I am concerned with the removal of where harbor seals are currently making a home. Would there be a way that a "new" home could be built for their use before the old one is removed?

Seals bring tourists/customers. And in general and more importantly, we should protect wildlife- even when that means an inconvenience to our plans.

Please make some considerations when continuing to review this project.

Thank you for your time and your work.

Concerned Alameda citizen,
Kimberly Buckingham

The project was authorized by WETA in 2009 and has been undergoing review ever since. It will include berths for 11 ferries, a service yard and a four-story workshop and administration building. The facility would also function as an emergency operation center for passenger service in the event of an emergency.



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

WETA Permit in Alameda, CA.

1 message

Lynn Silva <l.silva01@sbcglobal.net>

Wed, Oct 15, 2014 at 10:22 PM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

Dear ITP,

I'm writing to express my concern over WETA's permit application from the National Marine Fisheries Service that will allow temporary harassment and permanent displacement of the harbor seals that come to Alameda Point for food, resting and breeding. The seals made a home on a small dock (haul-out) at Alameda Point where WETA now plans to build a new ferry maintenance and operations facility. Their ultimate plan is to drive away the seals instead of co-existing with them. In fact, someone deliberately cut the ropes to the seal's haul-out, obviously to circumvent the issue. Fortunately, the haul-out merely sank a bit instead of drifting away and seals are still there on what's left to them.

Alameda is an island city in the midst of over-development for homes and businesses. In addition to seals, there are several species of protected birds that make Alameda their seasonal home. I don't know of any plans for a wetland area to accommodate marine wildlife and protect our shores. I would rather see the area that WETA plans to use made into a serene atmosphere for mammals, fowl and people but that's an uphill battle with the city leaders. At the very least, when it comes to the seals, I implore you to add the building of another haul-out in a suitable location for the seals as a mitigation measure with WETA before construction begins.

Thank you,

Lynn Silva

Resident of Alameda, CA.



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

WETA Harassment Permit

1 message

Eloise Hill <eloise.hill@rocketmail.com>

Thu, Oct 16, 2014 at 1:34 AM

Reply-To: Eloise Hill <eloise.hill@rocketmail.com>

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

NMFS,

Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, seals are federally protected animals because of their decline in population. Seals need haul-outs for rest, thermal regulation, social interaction, and to give birth. A mother was recently observed weaning and nursing her pup at the Alameda haul-out in question. According to the National Park Service, "Their population provides valuable insights into the condition of marine and coastal ecosystems." Based on these reasons and the fact that at least 20 harbor seals have been observed coming to Alameda Point to find food and a suitable breeding habitat and resting area in recent years, I request that NMFS reconsider granting WETA the proposed harassment permit and, if granted, do so only with the stipulation that WETA builds an alternative haul-out for the seals within the area.

Sincerely,
Eloise Hill



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Moving/disturbing Harbor Seals at Alameda Point, Alameda, CA: Harbor Seals need protection at this site

1 message

Sheila Stetson <sstetson@atel.com>

Thu, Oct 16, 2014 at 12:04 PM

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

Cc: "Sheila Stetson (sheebz_bear1@hotmail.com)" <sheebz_bear1@hotmail.com>

Dear Concern NOAA, NMFS, [et.al.](#) (today is 10/16/2014):

I am a resident of Alameda, CA. I recommend that WETA give precedence to the Harbor Seals who forage and haul out at Alameda Point, Alameda, CA. I know that WETA is applying for a permit from the National Marine Fisheries Service to allow for temporary harassment of the harbor seals while WETA destroys the seals' haul-out site so as to build a new maintenance and operations facility.

Has WETA chosen a sensible site? The health and location of feeding and hauling-out sites must be considered first. Is the site simply convenient for WETA? Has a study been done regarding the effects to be levelled upon the harbor seals?

As "responsible" humans, we should see ourselves as Good Stewards of wildlife: this is true on both large and small scales. Alameda would do well to protect its wealth of wildlife, not only for the animals themselves, but for the natural history wealth of the people who will live and visit Alameda. (Alameda must also take care of its Least Terns.)

So, I vote for the protection (immediate, as well as any mitigation efforts) for the harbor seals, who have neither vote nor voice in this matter. I am speaking for them.

Kind Regards,

Sheila A. Stetson

Homeowner/Resident, Alameda, CA

Work Direct: [415/616-3406](tel:4156163406)

Work E-mail: sstetson@atel.com



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Please Protect Harbor Seals

1 message

Geralyn Gulseth <gpirategirl@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: Geralyn Gulseth <gpirategirl@yahoo.com>
To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

Fri, Oct 17, 2014 at 1:12 AM

Re: WETA Permit Application at Alameda Point

Ms. Jolie Harrison
Chief, Permits and Conservation Division:

As a long-time Alameda homeowner, I am writing to ask that your Division please either deny or significantly modify a permit application submitted by the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) to "temporarily harass" harbor seals as it builds a new ferry maintenance facility.

As most people are aware, wildlife faces so many challenges these days, and the numbers of remaining species are dwindling quickly. At the very least, we must do everything we can to protect the remaining animals and try to protect our impact on their habitat.

Alameda is a beautiful city and most of its citizens value its beauty and enjoy its parks and open spaces, which include bird life and other wild animals. The harbor seals are another part of that beauty. Preserving these natural treasures also protects the value of our homes and increases the well-being and revenue of the city. To preserve what we homeowners support through our taxes, I ask that the Division deny this permit.

If a permit is to be issued, please consider requiring that an alternative new haul-out site be created before WETA begins any destruction or construction. That way, the animals could be given time to adjust to a new area. Please consider the impact on the seals, which uses the area as a breeding habitat.

Thank you for your consideration.

Geralyn Gulseth
110 Lagunaria Lane
Alameda, CA 94502



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Give Alameda seals their haulout

1 message

Janine Shafer <divajanina@aol.com>

Fri, Oct 17, 2014 at 2:48 AM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

To whom it may concern:

I am a Alameda Resident and one of our families favorite things is to go for walks along the water together and visit the seals. It is a big excitement with everyone getting 'tickles in their tummies' and wanting to take them all home. The idea of these wonderful beings not being able to have a safe place to enjoy as they and their ancestors AND pups is a true crime.

PLEASE reconsider the decision to take away their haulout permanently . I wish you would reconsider the entire idea of having a ferry 'center' in their habitat.

Thank You for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Janine D. Shafer and the Shafer Family



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

harbor seals Alameda

1 message

Judi Swenson <judi@rocketmail.com>

Fri, Oct 17, 2014 at 10:00 AM

Reply-To: Judi Swenson <judi@rocketmail.com>

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

I would like to say that any preservation of homes for our harbor seals, natural or not should be kept in place. We enjoy our occas sighting of harbor seals near our home in Alameda. Too many natural areas are being taken apart in the interest of development. Arrangements should be made to preserve the harbor seal habitat. I hope that all aspects of this development vs the harbor seals are investigated before any action is taken.

Judi Swenson



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Harboe Seals Alameda CA

1 message

wilma Chronister <rejie@pacbell.net>

Fri, Oct 17, 2014 at 11:37 AM

Reply-To: wilma Chronister <rejie@pacbell.net>

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

We consistently take away wild animal habitats. When they are all gone we will have no wild animals living except in zoos. It is our responsibility to ensure that does not happen. Please arrange a haul-out site for the seals adjacent to the build site. Tourists will be attracted, the seals gain and economy gains.

Wilma Chronister
Gene Chronister



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

WETA Alameda - Incidental Harassment Authorization comment

1 message

Irene <id94501@gmail.com>

Fri, Oct 17, 2014 at 8:52 PM

To: itp.guan@noaa.gov

To: Jolie Harrison, Chief of Permits and Conservation Division, National Marine Fisheries Service

Subject: San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) Central Bay Operations and Maintenance Facility Project in Alameda, CA

Dear Ms. Harrison,

My comment is that the loss of the harbor seals' haul out in the form of the old dock should require mitigation. Please consider my commentary in our local paper, the Alameda Sun, as part of my comments on WETA's Alameda Point project. The links to the newspaper (& how it appeared on the front page) and my blog are below.

<http://alamedasun.com/news/shake-rattle-and-ignore>

<http://alamedasun.com/sites/default/files/print-fronts/Page%201%20100914%20Front.pdf>

<http://islesay.wordpress.com/2014/10/09/shake-rattle-and-ignore/>

Thank you,
Irene Dieter
Alameda, CA



Shane Guan - NOAA Federal <shane.guan@noaa.gov>

Please save the harbor seals!

1 message

Bay <baybrown2002@yahoo.com>

Fri, Oct 17, 2014 at 12:13 PM

Reply-To: Bay <baybrown2002@yahoo.com>

To: "itp.guan@noaa.gov" <itp.guan@noaa.gov>

Please save the harbor seals that have been coming to Alameda Point to find food and a suitable breeding habitat and resting area for years. Please do not remove or disturb their habitat.

Residents and visitors to the area would like to see the seals remain and thrive.