

PACIFIC SCIENTIFIC REVIEW GROUP

A Regional Advisory Group to the National Marine Fisheries Service

April 26, 2016

Michael Scott
Inter-American Tropical Tuna
Commission
8901 La Jolla Shores Dr.
La Jolla, CA 92037
Phone: (858) 546-7045
E-mail: mscott@iattc.org

Hannah Bernard
Hawai'i Wildlife Fund

Robin Brown
Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

John Calambokidis
Cascadia Research

Mark Fraker
TerraMar Environmental Research,
Ltd.

Doyle Hanan
Hanan & Associates, Inc.

Jim Harvey
Moss Landing Marine Laboratories

Steve Jeffries
Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife

Tim Ragen
Marine Mammal Commission (ret.)

Katherine Ralls
Smithsonian Institution

Terry Wright
Northwest Indian Fisheries
Commission

Eileen Sobeck
Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
1335 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Ms. Sobeck,

Please find enclosed the minutes and recommendations from the meeting of the Pacific Scientific Review Group held 10-12 March 2015.

The SRG has recommended that full funding be reinstated for nationwide mammal stranding networks administered by NOAA (the John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program). Stranding network investigations document mortality of marine mammals and identify causes of such mortality, including such things as fishery interactions, human-generated noise, disease, harmful algal blooms, and shifts in survival and distribution that may portend changes in ocean ecosystems from large-scale episodic events (*e.g.*, El Niños) as well as systematic trends over longer time periods (*e.g.*, climate change). In the SRG's view, partial funding for this program is helpful but not sufficient to provide this kind of information, which is essential for a timely and accurate understanding of ocean health and trends therein. No other program provides such a comprehensive basis for assessing human effects on marine mammals and their ecosystems. Therefore, the SRG recommends that the NMFS fully restore funding and support for this vital program.

Once again, the SRG compliments your NMFS staff for their excellent presentations, outstanding research, and support of the SRG.

Sincerely,



Michael Scott
Chairman, Pacific Scientific Review Group

cc: Shannon Bettridge