

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 20, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

With the 61st meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) less than two months away, we write to urge your Administration to pursue a new course and exert clear and unambiguous leadership that will bring an end to the negotiations that would sanction commercial whaling. The approach that has been pursued by the U.S. delegation to the IWC in recent years and months is at odds with the expressed aspirations of the American people and may ultimately undermine science-based international whale conservation efforts. It must be rejected.

On February 2nd, 2009, the IWC released a report entitled the "Future of the IWC." This report, signed by the current head of the U.S. Delegation and Chair of the IWC, Dr. William Hogarth, proposes lifting, in part, the current moratorium on commercial whaling by legitimizing so-called scientific whaling conducted by Japan and sanctioning coastal whaling. Contrary to its purported goal of reducing whale mortality, if adopted it could potentially lead to greater numbers of whales being killed each year with the "blessing" of the IWC. The U.S. should not agree to such a proposal.

Despite the arguments that have been made by those who seek to sanction commercial whaling, the IWC is not broken. Rather, it is the focal point for an historic debate about our relationship to the great whales and the oceans they inhabit. As such, the U.S. must use its global influence to rally the conservation-minded IWC nations to send a strong message to Japan that commercial whaling, including coastal whaling, will not be agreed to. Moreover, the U.S. should look beyond the confines of the IWC forum for opportunities to find broader common ground with Japan and other nations who still seek to hunt whales for commercial purposes.

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Fortney Pete Stark
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

John Lewis
Member of Congress

Sam Farr
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Aaron Schock
Member of Congress



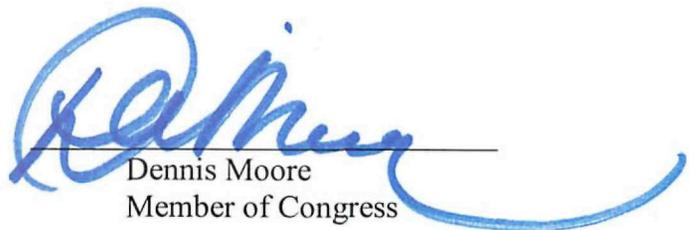
Mazie K. Hirono
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