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Lynne Barre  
Seattle Branch Chief  
Protected Resources Division  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
7600 Sand Point Way NE  
Seattle, WA 98115

15 December 2016

Dear Ms. Barre,

As someone who has spent his career studying whales it seems clear that the Southern Resident Killer Whale pods (SRKWs) face serious threats that have the potential of leading to their extinction. Research done by the National Marine Fisheries Service and others shows that these orcas face food shortages as well as habitat degradation from contaminants, noise and vessel disturbance.

I am a member of the Orca Relief Citizens' Alliance. Together with Project SeaWolf and the Center for Biological Diversity we submitted a petition to NOAA NMFS that offers a framework for establishing a Whale Protection Zone in Hario Strait off San Juan Island, WA. It would offer reduced noise and disturbance to the SRKWs and would give them a place to rest as well as offering unimpeded access to the core of their critical habitat

Having reviewed Orca Relief's regulatory petition, Ocean Alliance supports the request to establish a Whale Protection Zone as well as regulatory efforts designed to increase salmon populations and reduce contaminant loads.

I am writing to request that you start the process of creating a Whale Protection Zone as soon as possible. I worry that without such intervention these whales may not have a survivable future.

Sincerely,

Roger Payne, PhD  
Founder and President  
Ocean Alliance