



wearesonar.org

December 15, 2016

To: Lyne Barre
Seattle Branch Chief
Protected Resources Division
National Marine Fisheries Service
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98114

Dear Ms. Barre,

On behalf of Sonar, an organization dedicated to the rights and protection of cetaceans, I hereby support the establishment of a "Whale Protection Zone" (WPZ) near the San Juan Islands in order to protect the endangered population of resident orcas known as the Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW).

Co-signed by the Center for Biological Diversity, the Orca Relief Citizen's Alliance, and Project SeaWolf, and supported by many other groups and individuals, the proposed WPZ would comprise a 10-square-mile area that is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile wide, with a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile wide buffer zone, off the West side of San Juan Island. The WPZ would mandate reduced speeds for vessel traffic, a permit system for whale watching tourism and other protections which are key to the orca's survival. The WPZ will help to protect orcas from noise pollution and other types of disturbance that are known to cause harm to the SRKW. The major threats that have been identified, including threats to access to food resources and pollution, for example from potential oil spills, would be addressed by the WPZ.

The recent deaths of a mother and calf render efforts to protect this threatened population of whales even more urgent. With numbers dwindling down to 80 individuals, the time is now to enact stronger protections that are beneficial for both the cetacean and human community.

I hope that you will begin the process to create a WPZ. The Southern Residents need your help, now more than ever.

Sincerely,

Laura Bridgeman
Sonar

CC:

Penny Pritzker
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20230
Email: TheSec@doc.gov

Kathryn Sullivan
Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans & Atmosphere and
NOAA Administrator
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Email: kathryn.sullivan@noaa.gov

Eileen Sobeck
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Email: eileen.sobeck@noaa.gov

William Stelle
Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115
Email: Will.Stelle@noaa.gov

Bruce Stedman
Executive Director
Orca Relief Citizens' Alliance
Post Office Box 1969
Friday Harbor, WA 98250
Email: bstedman@orcarelief.org