

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 26, 2007

Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Honorable Carlos Gutierrez
Secretary of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Madam Secretary and Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to express our serious concern with the erosion of U.S. influence and leadership within the International Whaling Commission (IWC). We urge the Departments of State and Commerce to work together to renew that leadership before the IWC reconvenes this May in Anchorage, Alaska.

With the meeting being held on U.S. territory for the first time since 1989, IWC 59 provides a critical opportunity for the United States not only to secure a bowhead whale quota for our Alaskan Natives' subsistence hunt, but also for the United States to re-establish itself as a leader on whale conservation within the Commission and the broader international community. More immediately, IWC provides a critical challenge for the United States to reverse the current trend within the Commission, and work with like-minded countries to safeguard the moratorium on commercial whaling and advance a strong conservation agenda that addresses the many and varied threats that confront the world's whales and dolphins.

For more than three decades, the United States has led international efforts to protect the world's great whales from the threat of commercial whaling. The government did not assume this role on its own initiative, but accepted it at the behest of and on behalf of the American people. The adoption of the Pelly and Packwood-Magnuson amendments in the 1970s reflected the strong view of the American public that the United States must not only cease commercial whaling itself, but do everything within its power to end the practice globally. Through the enforcement of those laws, and the fullest use of its diplomatic resources, the United States helped win a global moratorium on commercial whaling in 1982.

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The moratorium's entry into force in 1986 was both a victory for whale conservation and a milestone for U.S. environmental diplomacy.

Over the ensuing years, the sentiment of the American people has grown even more strongly in favor of whale conservation and against commercial whaling. At the same time, science has identified new threats to whales from pollution and global warming that make commercial whaling even less justifiable today than it was two decades ago. In light of both this broad public support, and the serious new threats facing the world's great whales, we are deeply concerned about the steady erosion of the moratorium and U.S. leadership within the IWC.

Since 1984, 9,220 whales have been killed for commercial purposes under the guise of scientific research, including nearly 8,000 whales within the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary. Before the IWC reconvenes in May, Japan plans to kill another 1,325 whales in the Southern Ocean and the North Pacific Ocean, including endangered fin and sperm whales. These are in addition to growing numbers of whales killed commercially by Norway and Iceland. In all, 23,661 whales were killed by commercial whalers since the moratorium came into force, nearly all in violation of international law.

The Icelandic hunt epitomizes the pointlessness and waste of this continued slaughter. After killing seven endangered fin whales (World Conservation Union listed) last fall, Icelandic whalers put at least 100 metric tons of whale meat into cold storage. The remaining 179 tons were discarded in a municipal dump. Egregious as this is, Iceland's actions are dwarfed by those of Japan, which continues whaling on a massive scale despite having stockpiled nearly 5,000 metric tons (11 million pounds) of whale meat. Put plainly, commercial whaling is a brutal, pointless practice with no place in the modern economy or the modern world.

It is, therefore, both remarkable and regrettable that, even as demand for whale products has evaporated, pro-whaling nations have orchestrated a growing political and diplomatic assault on both the moratorium and the IWC itself. This assault reached a new milestone last June when Japan and its allies mobilized the simple majority of votes necessary to adopt the so-called "St. Kitts & Nevis Declaration", challenging the validity of the moratorium and declaring an intent to "normalize" the IWC, returning it to the dark days when the IWC protected whalers at the expense of whales.

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We commend the United States' decision not to attend Japan's "normalization" meeting, and appreciate your leadership in convincing other like minded nations to boycott as well.

While we agree that securing the aboriginal quota is a priority, we also urge the United States to do more to shore up the IWC and safeguard both the moratorium and the whales from the resumption of commercial whaling and the continuing farce of "scientific" whaling. Specifically, we ask you to:

- Publicly restate the United States' strong opposition to the resumption of commercial whaling in any form;**
- Convey clearly and unequivocally to all nations the United States' strong national interest in the protection of whales and the maintenance of the moratorium;**
- Certify Iceland and Japan under the Pelly Amendment for undermining the IWC moratorium and impose strong economic measures consistent with that certification;**
- Use all diplomatic mechanisms at your disposal to recapture a solid voting majority in favor of whale conservation within the IWC;**
- Pursue all legal, diplomatic, and administrative tools available to end "scientific whaling;"**
- Refuse to engage in any negotiation or reinterpretation that would weaken the moratorium, legitimize lethal scientific whaling or otherwise weaken the IWC;**
- Work with like-minded countries to ensure continued support for the IWC moratorium within other forums, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species; and**
- Make the achievement of these goals a matter of priority within your Departments.**

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As an aid to our oversight efforts, we ask that you provide us with a detailed briefing on your strategy for achieving these objectives at your earliest convenience. We look forward to your response, and to our continued collaboration on this important issue.

Sincerely,



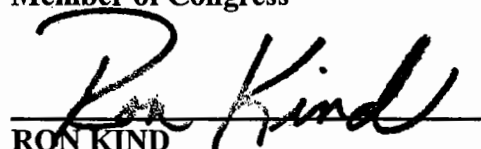
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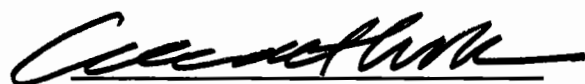
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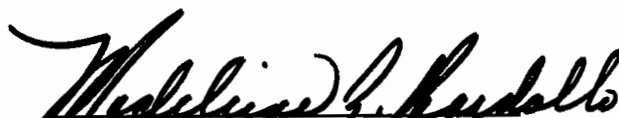
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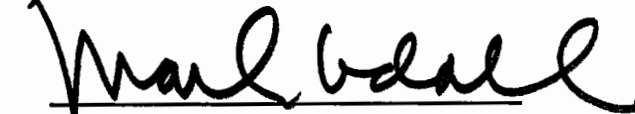
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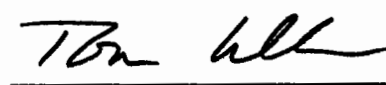
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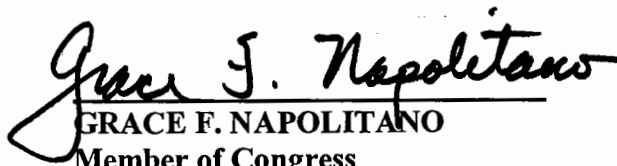
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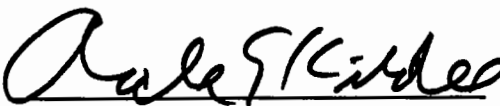
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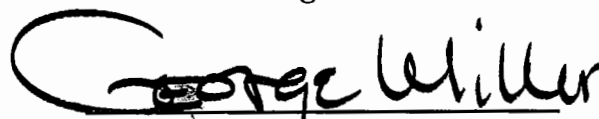
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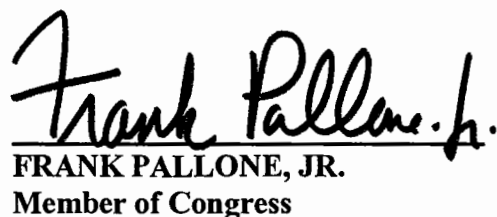
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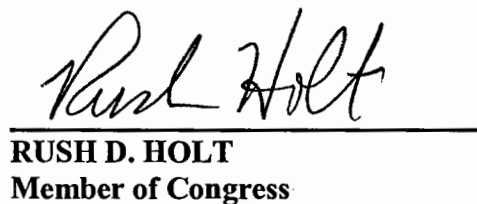

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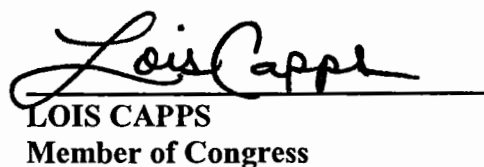

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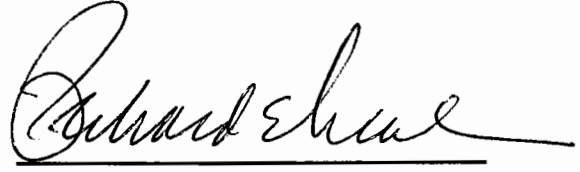

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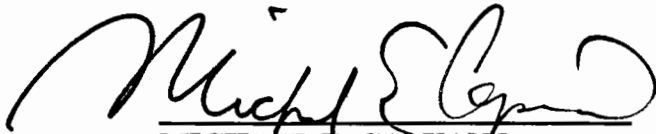
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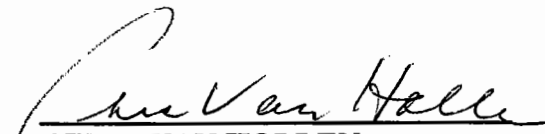
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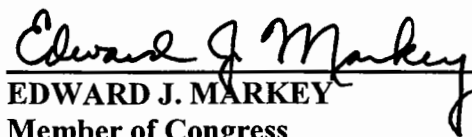
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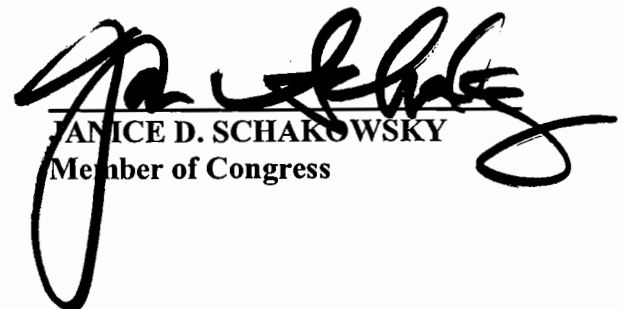
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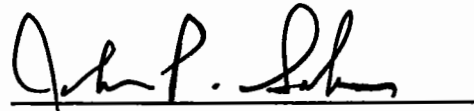
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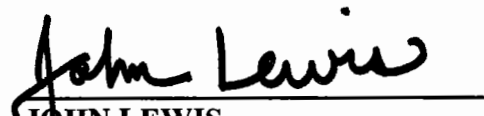

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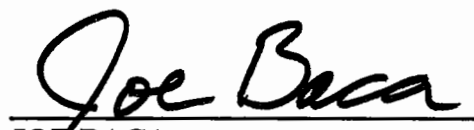

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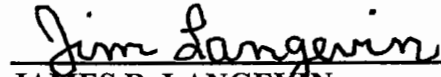

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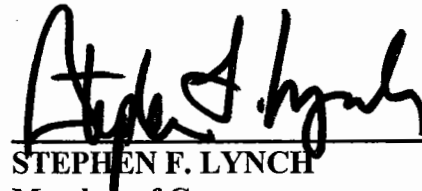
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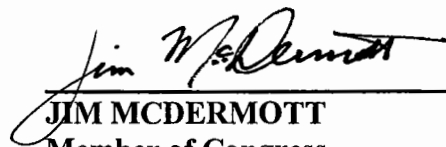
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