

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 29, 2007

The Honorable Ryozo Kato  
Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary  
of Japan to the United States  
2520 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Ambassador Kato:

We write today to respectfully request that Japan reconsider its impending hunt of approximately 1,000 whales, including fin and protected humpback whales. As we understand, a Japanese whaling fleet is en route to the Antarctic Ocean to hunt these mammals over the next few months for what Japan has called research purposes. We are particularly concerned about the size and scope of the hunt, and the targeting of 50 humpback whales. This is the first time Japan has sought to kill this particular species since it was protected by a worldwide moratorium in 1966.

First and foremost, we believe there are other means available for Japan to undertake scientific research on whales and whale populations. In 1986, the International Whaling Commission banned commercial whaling, while providing an exemption for scientific research. While we acknowledge the exemption, we question the necessity of conducting a hunt of this magnitude, and are strongly opposed to the targeting of protected species. Non-lethal techniques exist that allow collection of necessary data to better understand whale populations, and we encourage Japan to conduct its research using these methods.

We also worry that Japan's proposed actions could inflict significant harm on vulnerable whale populations. Whales are highly migratory animals and a shared global resource. Humpback whales, known for their unique vocalizations and athleticism, were once hunted to the brink of extinction. And although populations have increased, the World Conservation Union currently lists the humpback whale and the fin whale as vulnerable and endangered, respectively.

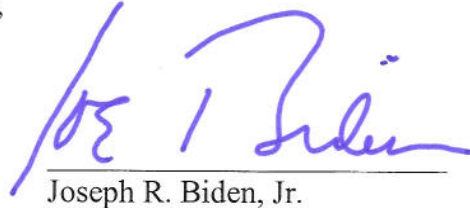
As such, we join the growing chorus of world leaders and environmental experts in asking Japan to reconsider its decision to conduct this hunt, or, at a minimum, significantly scale back its scope. We also ask that Japan immediately cease the killing of both humpback and fin whales, and only employ non-lethal techniques for studying these populations. By pursuing these actions, Japan can continue to make significant scientific contributions, while conserving and protecting these important species.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

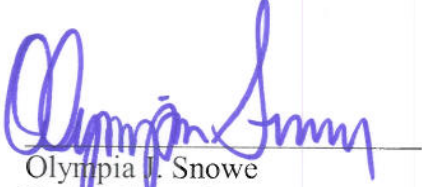
Sincerely,



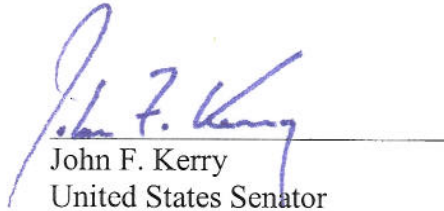
Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



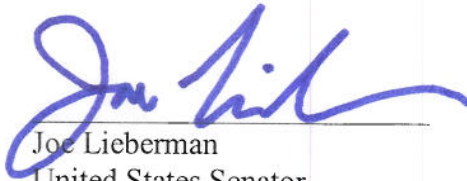
Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
United States Senator



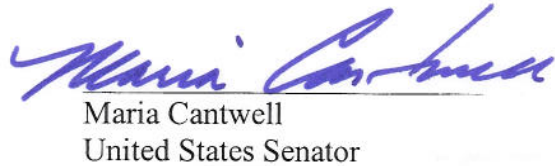
Olympia J. Snowe  
United States Senator



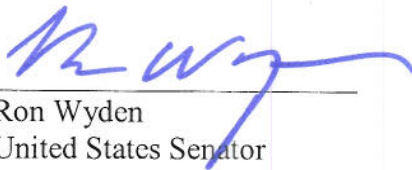
John F. Kerry  
United States Senator



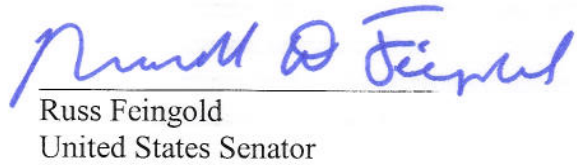
Joe Lieberman  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Russ Feingold  
United States Senator