

LES AUCOIN
1ST DISTRICT, OREGON



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

April 12, 1979

Dear Colleague:

On April 2 I introduced Concurrent Resolution 92. This Resolution urges the International Whaling Commission to adopt an indefinite moratorium on the commercial killing of whales at its July 1979 meeting. A similar Resolution has also been introduced in the Senate by my colleague Warren Magnuson. These measures encourage a stronger policy than that of the Administration which plans to advocate a 10-year moratorium in the IWC negotiations this summer. I don't believe that position provides sufficient protection for the rapidly dwindling whale population.

Unique in form and intelligence, the whale is one of nature's most precious gifts. Whaling pirates and sanctioned industry harvests threaten the mere survival of this noble and peaceful life form, one of which is killed every 22 minutes; that's over 66 per day. Unless we demand more stringent conservation practices in our present management regime, the whale population may never regain a self-sustaining level.

Current estimates of the whale population, while based on valid scientific attempts to collect data, are unreliable. At best, they represent an approximate census, one which might be viewed as questionable given that many of the figures are supplied by commercial whaling operators. The biases prevalent in the industry reports, compounded with the degree of outlaw whaling which accounts for 20 per cent of the world's whale kill, leave no doubt in my mind that the IWC's current management program is not sufficient to prevent the eventual extinction of these creatures.

The largest creature on earth possesses many fascinating characteristics which remain widely unknown:

-- The "song" of the whale lasts about 20 minutes and is often repeated over hours at a time. In open waters, it can be heard as far as 200 miles away.

-- Whales migrate in herds, highly susceptible to the sophisticated hunting techniques of an industry which employs helicopters and 200-pound harpoons shot from cannons to debilitate a mammal weighing more than 2000 people.

-- The blue whale's heart weighs in at 1200 pounds, and some its arteries are so large that children could crawl through them!

I invite you to join me and the growing number of concerned individuals who are urgently calling for action against the massive slaughter of this unique marine mammal. I invite you to add your signature to this House Concurrent Resolution 92 which will confirm a United States presence in the global effort to save the remainder of the noble and peaceful whale.

Please contact Amy Becker or Claire Fronville of my staff at 225-3444.

Sincerely,



LES AuCOIN
Member of Congress