

Jolie Harrison,
Chief Permits and Conservation Division,
Office of Protected Resources National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Dr. Harrison,

My name is (ENTER YOUR NAME HERE).

Thank you for the opportunity to share my profound concern and disapproval about the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposed rule for the incidental take of Southern Resident orcas by the Navy.

The number of takes would severely impact the dwindling population of this endangered species with 72 individuals remaining. I recognize the potential for adverse impacts from Navy training and testing and I have enormous concerns about the Navy's use of sonar equipment adversely impacting the already endangered Southern Residents Orcas.

Impacts from Navy activities have been recognized as a threat to Southern Resident Orca survival and recovery in both the U.S. and Canada. I believe there needs to be more discussion about adverse impacts on the ecosystem, cetaceans and the endangered Southern Resident Orcas before these proposed training and testing activities begin.

The Navy plans to increase the frequency of several activities, including sonar testing within Southern Resident Orca critical habitat. The Navy's application and NOAA's proposed rule would allow for 51 instances of level B harassment affecting Southern Resident Orcas every year for the next seven years.

As the proposed rule notes, that means that 68% of the endangered Southern Resident orcas could be affected. This is absolutely unacceptable to me; these Orcas are critically endangered and the loss of even one individual brings them closer to extinction.

The Southern Resident Orcas live and hunt, socialize and interact through echolocation and the Navy's activities are highly likely to increase noise and disturbances that adversely affect the Southern Resident Orcas. With the very real potential to cause death, displacement and interference of feeding, hunting, breeding, socializing, nursing, resting. Navy testing is already altering the sounds in the Salish Sea including areas where orcas are present, and the Navy's use of sonar can cause temporary hearing loss and stress in orcas.

Laws are in place to protect people, animals and the environment from harm and this blatant disregard for the Marine Mammal Protection Act and The Endangered Species Act is unacceptable. I recognize National Security is important to everyone and there are ways to continue to perform necessary trainings without severely impacting, killing or driving to extinction the beloved Southern Resident Orcas.

The Navy and NMFS needs to consider the highly endangered status and consistent decline of the endangered Southern Resident Orcas and that any threat of population and harm to individual orcas will bring catastrophe. Without solutions and actions for protection the Southern Resident Orcas will slip into extinction. We must stop this.

Sincerely,
(YOUR NAME HERE)