



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

5 December 2013

Ms. Hope Grey
Service Information Collection Clearance Officer
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
MS-2042-PDM
4401 North Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22203

RE: Proposed Information Collection 1018-0070

Dear Ms. Grey:

The Marine Mammal Commission has reviewed the Fish and Wildlife Service's notice (78 Fed. Reg. 61379) regarding a proposed information collection request associated with the requirements of section 101(a)(5)(A) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The notice specifically refers to information pertaining to oil and gas industry activities and the incidental taking of polar bears and Pacific walruses in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas.

Collection of the specified information is necessary to ensure the protection and conservation of polar bear and walrus populations in the Arctic and that the goals of the MMPA are met. It allows FWS to make the required findings for issuing the appropriate authorizations for the incidental taking of marine mammals under the statute and implementing regulations, and ensures permittee compliance with specific monitoring and reporting measures. The information also helps to provide a better understanding of the types of effects the oil and gas industry activities are having on polar bear and walrus populations and the effectiveness of mitigation and monitoring requirements. Therefore, the Commission supports FWS's proposed information collection request. To enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected, the FWS should request that oil and gas industry companies submit information electronically and then make that information publicly accessible, barring any confidentiality concerns.

Please contact me if you need additional information to support the Service's request.

Sincerely,

Rebecca J. Lent, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: Deborah Pierce Williams, FWS Marine Mammals Management Office, Anchorage, AK