

REPORT ON WHALING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY  
NATIONALS OF ICELAND

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MESSAGE

FROM

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES**

TRANSMITTING

A REPORT REGARDING CERTIFICATION BY THE SECRETARY OF  
COMMERCE THAT ICELAND HAS CONDUCTED WHALING ACTIVI-  
TIES THAT DIMINISH THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A CONSERVATION  
PROGRAM OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION  
(IWC), PURSUANT TO 22 U.S.C. 1978(b)



SEPTEMBER 15, 2011.—Message and accompanying papers referred to the  
Committees on Foreign Affairs and Natural Resources, and ordered to  
be printed

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U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE



*To the Congress of the United States:*

On July 19, 2011, Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke certified under section 8 of the Fisherman's Protective Act of 1967, as amended (the "Pelly Amendment") (22 U.S.C. 1978), that nationals of Iceland are conducting whaling activities that diminish the effectiveness of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) conservation program. This message constitutes my report to the Congress consistent with subsection (b) of the Pelly Amendment.

In 1982, the IWC set catch limits for all commercial whaling at zero. This decision, known as the commercial whaling moratorium, is in effect today. Iceland abided by the moratorium until 1992, when it withdrew from the IWC. In 2002, Iceland rejoined the IWC with a reservation to the moratorium on commercial whaling. In 2003, Iceland began a lethal scientific research whaling program. In 2004, Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans certified Iceland under the Pelly Amendment for lethal scientific research whaling. When Iceland resumed commercial whaling in 2006, Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez retained Iceland's certification, which remains in effect today.

Iceland's commercial harvest of fin whales escalated dramatically over the past few years. In addition, Iceland recently resumed exporting whale products. Of particular concern to the United States, Iceland harvested 125 endangered fin whales in 2009 and 148 in 2010, a significant increase from the total of 7 fin whales it commercially harvested between 1987 and 2007.

Iceland's sole fin whaling company, Hvalur hf, suspended its fin whaling due to the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, where it exports its whale meat. Despite this suspension, Iceland continues to permit whaling and has a government issued fin whale quota in effect for the 2011 season that continues to exceed catch levels that the IWC's scientific body advised would be sustainable if the moratorium was removed. This continues to present a threat to the conservation of fin whales. Further, Icelandic nationals continue to hunt minke whales commercially and Iceland's exports of whale meat to Japan reportedly increased significantly in both March and April 2011.

Iceland's actions threaten the conservation status of an endangered species and undermine multilateral efforts to ensure greater worldwide protection for whales. Iceland's increased commercial whaling and recent trade in whale products diminish the effectiveness of the IWC's conservation program because: (1) Iceland's commercial harvest of whales undermines the moratorium on commercial whaling put in place by the IWC to protect plummeting whale stocks; (2) the fin whale harvest greatly exceeds catch levels that the IWC's scientific body advised would be sustainable if the moratorium were removed; and (3) Iceland's harvests are not likely to

be brought under IWC management and control at sustainable levels through multilateral efforts at the IWC.

In his letter of July 19, 2011, Secretary Locke expressed his concern for these actions, and I share these concerns. To ensure that this issue continues to receive the highest level of attention, I direct: (1) relevant U.S. delegations attending meetings with Icelandic officials and senior Administration officials visiting Iceland to raise U.S. concerns regarding commercial whaling by Icelandic companies and seek ways to halt such action; (2) Cabinet secretaries to evaluate the appropriateness of visits to Iceland depending on continuation of the current suspension of fin whaling; (3) the Department of State to examine Arctic cooperation projects, and where appropriate, link U.S. cooperation to the Icelandic government changing its whaling policy and abiding by the IWC moratorium on commercial whaling; (4) the Departments of Commerce and State to consult with other international actors on efforts to end Icelandic commercial whaling and have Iceland abide by the IWC moratorium on commercial whaling; (5) the Department of State to inform the Government of Iceland that the United States will continue to monitor the activities of Icelandic companies that engage in commercial whaling; and (6) relevant U.S. agencies to continue to examine other options for responding to continued whaling by Iceland.

I concur with the Secretary of Commerce's recommendation to pursue the use of non-trade measures and that the actions outlined above are the appropriate course of action to address this issue. Accordingly, I am not directing the Secretary of the Treasury to impose trade measures on Icelandic products for the whaling activities that led to the certification by the Secretary of Commerce. However, to ensure that this issue continues to receive the highest level of attention, I am directing the Departments of State and Commerce to continue to keep the situation under review and continue to urge Iceland to cease its commercial whaling activities. Further, within 6 months, or immediately upon the resumption of fin whaling by Icelandic nationals, I have directed relevant departments and agencies to report to me through the Departments of State and Commerce on their actions. I believe these actions hold the most promise of effecting a reduction in Iceland's commercial whaling activities.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *September 15, 2011.*