

16 MS. GIBSON: I'm Inga Gibson. I'm the
17 Hawaii State Director with the Humane Society, United
18 States. We will be submitting formal written
19 comments, but I wanted to make a few comments for the
20 record, if I may.

21 We are very concerned, obviously, with
22 the potential impacts on marine mammals and other
23 animals in the Pacific and Hawaii. We're especially
24 concerned about the potential permanent and temporary
25 hearing loss, lung injuries, gastrointestinal
1 injuries, and death. We understand that there's no
2 presentation or analysis of alternatives at this time
3 that would in any way significantly reduce the
4 unprecedented impacts and level of harm to these
5 marine animals, many of which are protected under both
6 the MMPA and the SMR, or in some cases are critically
7 endangered, such as the Hawaiian monk seal.

8 We are concerned with the Navy's
9 mitigation scheme, centered on the ability of lookouts
10 for whales and dolphins, and do not believe that it
11 will result in an appreciative decrease in marine
12 mammal take. Furthermore, we are concerned that the
13 Navy appears to dismiss what is acknowledged to be the
14 most effective means to reduce marine mammal take and
15 avoiding areas associated with high marine mammal
16 density. That, again, is what we would like to see,
17 is an avoidance and a better scheme in avoiding
18 altogether some of the areas where there is strong
19 marine mammal presence.

20 We also encourage the Navy in their
21 continued efforts to be seen as an effective steward
22 of the ocean environment to take steps to
23 significantly reduce the level of harm in training and
24 testing activities. Again, we'll be submitting formal
25 more detailed written comments. There is also concern
1 about the significant increase in the proposed takes
2 under the new EIS from the prior EIS and the numbers
3 of animals potentially impacted. Also a concern with
4 the verification of take, and the methods used to
5 verify take, if that is even verified. Again, thank
6 you for this opportunity.