



**Statement by Monica Medina, Director of the Pew Whale Conservation Project  
On the United States Senate’s Support for Stronger Whale Conservation**

(Anchorage, Alaska) Today, Monica Medina, director of the Pew Whale Conservation Project, praised Senator Joseph Biden, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator John Kerry, and 10 other U.S. Senators for sending a strong letter urging President Bush to re-establish the United States as a leader on whale conservation. The letter coincides with the beginning of the International Whaling Commission on Monday in Anchorage, Alaska.

The following statement may be attributed to Monica Medina.

“As we celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the moratorium on commercial whaling, we applaud the United States Senate for renewing its commitment to the conservation of the world’s whales. This clear call for the conservation of whales joins an earlier bipartisan letter from the House of Representatives. It is indeed time to ‘Save the Whales’ once again.”

“Large cracks are appearing in the moratorium due to relentless pressure by pro-whaling nations, such as Japan, Norway and Iceland, to resume commercial whaling. In fact, almost 2000 whales were killed last year, the most since the moratorium went into effect.”

“President Bush created the largest marine sanctuary on Earth almost one year ago, so he clearly has an interest in the oceans. Now it is time for the U.S. to use its full diplomatic power to persuade a majority of nations to renew their commitments to protecting the world’s whales.”

“The real question being debated in Anchorage is whether the world’s whales will be able to live their lives safe from the threat of high tech harpoons, or whether we will return to commercial whaling that drove humpbacks and many other species of whales to the brink of extinction.”

*The following statements are from Senator Biden and Senator Kerry, co-authors of the letter.*

“Save the Whales is more than a bumper sticker,” said Sen. Joe Biden. “The moratorium on commercial whaling that was enacted 20 years ago has proven ineffective and whales are being killed in staggering numbers – 2000 last year alone. The U.S. was once the leader of international efforts to protect our whales and we need to step it back up. We

need to close the loopholes that allow for continued commercial whaling and put conservation back on top of the priority list.”

Senator Kerry commented, “This letter makes clear we are serious about saving at-risk whales. We need to charge ahead with our mission to conserve our precious wildlife, not take a step back. This Administration has allowed American influence to wane in too many ways, including on environmental issues, and it’s obvious that there is a cost to this erosion. We’re demanding we re-assert U.S. influence.”

### **About the Pew Environment Group**

For the past two decades, Pew has been a major force in both informing and promoting conservation policy in the United States and, in recent years, internationally. The Pew Environment Group works to advance environmental policy by supporting top-level scientific research; building, assisting and coordinating broad coalitions of organizations representing diverse constituencies concerned about environmental protection in the United States and abroad; and making strategic investments in strengthening the capacity of environmental groups to achieve shared policy goals. Our work is focused on reducing the scope and severity of three major global environmental problems:

- dramatic changes to the Earth’s climate caused by the increasing concentration of greenhouse gases in the planet’s atmosphere;
- the erosion of large wilderness ecosystems that contain a great part of the world’s remaining biodiversity; and
- the destruction of the world’s marine environment, with a particular emphasis on global fisheries.

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