



To  
Prime Minister  
Mr. Geir H. Haarde  
Stjornarradshusinu vid Laekjartorg  
150 Reykjavik  
Iceland

May 2007

Honorable Prime Minister

We, the undersigned, represent four companies based in Europe. Each year, we bring many visitors to enjoy the beauty and grandeur of Iceland and, particularly, to experience its rich and varied marine wildlife. Iceland is rightly famous as one of the best places in the world to watch a variety of whales and dolphins, including the majestic blue whale, the largest creature ever to inhabit our planet. Minke whales – often the first to approach the whale watch boats - are particular favourites. For many of our guests, a whale watch trip is one of the highlights of their holiday – or indeed its focus. A new report states that an estimated 89,000 tourists went whale watching in Iceland in 2006, producing total revenues to the Icelandic economy in excess of 23 million EUR. [Figures reported by the Husavik Whale Centre, 2006]

We are extremely concerned about the whaling activities around Iceland and its negative effect on tourism. Already, three minke whales have been killed in Iceland's "scientific" whale hunt. On Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, Iceland resumed the commercial hunt for minke whales under the 2006/2007 quota when the Njordur KO 7 killed a minke whale. Many people feel strongly that whale watching is not compatible with whaling.

This year, the Icelandic Travel Association passed a resolution asking the Icelandic government to stop all plans for future whaling as it is harming the image of Iceland. In support of this resolution, we urge the Icelandic Government to reconsider its whaling plans - if not for the sake of the whales being targeted, then for Iceland's thriving whale watch industry, and its tourism economy as a whole.

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