



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
9500 Thornton Avenue  
Newark, California 94560



23 September 2011

Kai Lee  
Program Officer, Conservation & Science  
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation  
300 2nd Street  
Los Altos, CA 94022

Dear Dr. Lee,

I am writing on behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to express our support for PRBO Conservation Science's (PRBO) proposal to the David and Lucile Packard Foundation for scientific analyses in support of ecosystem restoration on the Farallon Islands, Farallon National Wildlife Refuge, California. The Service manages the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge, which hosts globally significant populations of seabirds, marine mammals, and other wildlife. Since the late 1960s, the Service has worked cooperatively with PRBO to caretake the islands and study its natural resources.

PRBO's proposal seeks to provide additional scientific analyses to help inform the current NEPA process for our proposed eradication of invasive House Mice from the South Farallon Islands. The proposed analyses will allow for better understanding of the relationship between mice, their Burrowing Owl predators, and the Ashy Storm-Petrel. The Ashy Storm-Petrel is a globally rare seabird species, with its largest population on the Farallon Islands, is listed as a California Bird Species of Special Concern, a Service species of management concern, and is a major conservation priority for the Refuge. Another important component of the project will be to conduct a population viability analysis to estimate the maximum number of Western Gulls that could be taken incidentally during the proposed eradication without significantly affecting the long-term viability of the population. Western Gulls, which have their world's largest colony on the Farallon Islands, are the primary species of concern from incidental take from proposed eradication efforts.

This new research would greatly assist the Service in our goals of quantifying the real effect house mice have on storm-petrel predation through indirect impacts, proposing reasonable long-term population responses of storm-petrels to possible eradication action, and the population implications of Western Gull mortality from any proposed eradication. This information would be extremely valuable in the Service's assessment of this process going forward, as part of the NEPA process. We look forward to receiving the PRBO information as it will greatly assist us in assessing the environmental impacts of the project as a whole and evaluating specific restoration methods. The Farallon National Wildlife Refuge strongly supports PRBO's proposal, and hope that the Packard Foundation will provide funds for this important research that will help to guide



important conservation decisions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gerry McChesney  
Manager, Farallon National Wildlife Refuge