



University of Hawaii at Manoa

Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
P.O.Box 1346 • Coconut Island • Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744
Cable Address: UNIHAW

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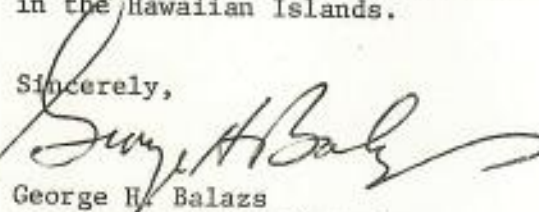
Mr. Harold B. Allen
Acting Regional Director
National Marine Fisheries Service
9450 Koger Boulevard
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

Dear Mr. Allen:

I am sorry to have taken so long to respond to your letter of 16 February 1982, but other pressing research activities here in the Pacific have demanded my attention. I have now had the opportunity to study and review the petition you sent me requesting a "trade exemption for maricultured green sea turtle products." Briefly stated, I am unable to find any new biological or economic data in the petition that would support or justify granting the request. Basically the same arguments have been set forth that were previously rejected by the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Courts, and even earlier by the State of California. The evidence and arguments set forth over the years to support the ban on maricultured products were, and still are, in my view, more than ample to show that protection of wild sea turtle populations would very likely be enhanced. Furthermore, if maricultured products are exempted, it is my view that the threat to wild turtles will increase by both the new additional "farms" that will surely come about, and by increased illegal poaching.

In closing, I might add that I am convinced that the ban on maricultured products has served to decrease the illegal taking of green turtles here in the Hawaiian Islands.

Sincerely,



George H. Balazs
Assistant Marine Biologist
(currently serving under an
IPA contract with NMFS)