



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

2800 Cottage Way, Ste 2606
Sacramento, CA 95825



In Reply Refer To:
Service/LR8

The Honorable Jared Huffman
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Huffman,

Thank you for your June 22, 2022 letter regarding efforts to restore the Farallon Islands ecosystem through the Farallon Islands Invasive House Mouse Eradication Project. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) appreciates and shares your interest in preserving and protecting one of the most unique, biodiverse ecosystems on the planet using the best possible scientific solutions. Over the last 50 years, the Service has worked to restore the Farallones, with significant improvements made by removing invasive animals and plants and that were or are negatively impacting the island ecosystem.

The Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) is located on the Pacific coast approximately 28 miles west of San Francisco, California. In addition to its many native plants, salamanders, crickets and other invertebrates, these rocky islands host the largest seabird nesting colony in the contiguous United States, with more than 25 percent of California's breeding seabirds. This includes the largest colony of ash storm-petrels in the world, with nearly half the world's population of this species. Before human-caused disturbances, including overhunting and introducing invasive species, more than one million seabirds bred on the Farallones. Alongside partners, the Service has protected, monitored, researched, and managed the islands since 1971.

The ecosystem on the Farallones is severely out of balance, significantly due to the human introduction of invasive, non-native house mice. The house mice have direct and indirect harmful impacts on the islands' breeding seabirds, especially ash storm-petrels, but also on Leach's storm-petrels, as well as on endemic plants and animals. Removing invasive house mice will allow the ecosystem of the globally important Farallones to recover from human impacts, restoring the islands to a more natural state that will also build resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The Service and its partners spent nearly 20 years researching and studying the best possible solutions to address the severe ecosystem imbalance on the Farallon Islands caused by the

invasive house mouse. Ensuring 100 percent removal of the invasive mouse from the islands, in addition to continued biosecurity efforts, is the only way to allow the ecosystem to recover. The Service's selection of a short-term, limited use of the rodenticide Brodifacoum-25D Conservation, which is a professional-grade product approved only for conservation projects, was the result of rigorous research into the best proven scientific techniques. A controlled, short-term, limited use of the rodenticide brodifacoum by skilled experts, using best management practices from hundreds of successful eradications world-wide, poses predictable and mitigatable risks to best ensure minimal impacts to native wildlife, the marine environment, and other non-target resources.

The Service did not choose this preferred alternative lightly. It is the result of a long, detailed process involving research, analyses, expert review, public input, and careful consideration. The Service remains committed to closely monitoring and considering the best, scientifically supported options that will best ensure success, including the elimination of impacts from the mice while minimizing negative impacts to the to the iconic Farallon Islands and surrounding Gulf of the Farallones.

Thank you again for your interest and shared values. For any additional questions or concerns, please contact Paul Souza, California-Great Basin Regional Director, via email at Paul_Souza@fws.gov or by phone at 916-414-6469.

Sincerely,

Martha Williams
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service