

## Advance Letter

<DATE>

John Smith  
123 Main Street  
Anywhere, USA 12345

Dear <Name>,

**We need your help to learn what the public thinks about protecting Cook Inlet beluga whales.** The population of beluga whales in the Cook Inlet of Alaska declined rapidly during the 1990s and is not recovering as scientists expected since then. Some actions have been taken to protect Cook Inlet beluga whales, and the government is considering what more, if anything, to do to protect them. Even though you may not be familiar with this issue, your opinion matters. Government actions to protect Cook Inlet beluga whales affect all U.S. households through federal government spending.

In the next few days, you will receive a survey in the mail with pictures and questions about the Cook Inlet beluga whale and other whales. The survey does not require any special knowledge.

**We know your time is valuable. You will find \$X included with your survey as a small token of our appreciation for your participation.** Your household is part of a small number of households across the country scientifically selected to help. To make sure we hear from a true cross-section of households, we need to hear from you.

This survey is being conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a U.S. government agency charged with making decisions about Cook Inlet beluga whale management activities.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Dan Lew and Brian Garber-Yonts  
Project Directors  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

## Letter with First Mailing of Survey

<DATE>

John Smith  
123 Main Street  
Anywhere, USA 12345

Dear <Name>,

Enclosed is the questionnaire I wrote to you about last week.

**We need your help to learn what the public thinks about protecting Cook Inlet beluga whales.** The population of Cook Inlet beluga whales declined rapidly during the 1990s and since then has not recovering as expected. The federal government is considering what more, if anything, to do to protect them.

**Even though you may not be familiar with this issue, your opinion matters.** Any government actions to protect Cook Inlet beluga whales will affect all U.S. households through federal government spending. Your household is one of only a select few from across the country scientifically selected to provide opinions to be considered along with information from scientists and planners. To keep costs low and to make sure we hear from a true cross-section of the public, we need to hear from you.

Your questionnaire should be completed by either the male or female head of your household. The survey takes most people about 20 minutes to complete, sometimes more, sometimes less. The survey does not require any special knowledge – we just ask that you consider each question and respond with your own opinion.

Your name and address will be kept separate from your responses. Only your responses will be provided to the researchers for analysis. The identification number on the back of the survey is there so that XXXXXXXXX, a survey firm hired to assist us, can check your name off when the questionnaire is returned. If you have any questions, please call XXXXXXXXX toll-free at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

Thank you for your help, and please remember to complete all the questions.

Sincerely,

Dan Lew and Brian Garber-Yonts  
Project Directors  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

## Reminder Postcard

<DATE>

Last week a questionnaire was mailed to you seeking your opinions about the Cook Inlet beluga whale, a species protected under the Endangered Species Act.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, please accept our sincere thanks. If you have not completed and returned the survey, we ask that you do so today.

**It is very important that we hear from you.** You are one of a small number of households across the country selected to give your opinions on this matter. Your response will help shape decisions about federal government actions and spending on this topic. However, a high rate of participation is required to include public opinion from the questionnaire in these decisions.

**If you need another copy of the questionnaire,** please call XXXXXXXX, a survey firm hired to assist us, at 1-800-XXX-XXXX and a questionnaire will be mailed to you today.

**Thank you for your help.**

Dan Lew and Brian Garber-Yonts  
Project Directors  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

## Letter with Second Mailing of Survey

<DATE>

John Smith  
123 Main Street  
Anywhere, USA 12345

Dear NAME

**We realize you are busy but we need your help to learn what the public thinks about protecting Cook Inlet beluga whales.** The population of Cook Inlet beluga whales declined rapidly during the 1990s and since then has not recovering as expected. The federal government is considering what more, if anything, to do to protect them.

It is important that we hear from you:

- Even though you may not be familiar with Cook Inlet beluga whales, any additional government actions to protect them will affect all U.S. households through federal government spending.
- Your household is one of only a select few from across the country scientifically selected to provide opinions [to represent the entire U.S.] [to represent all Alaska residents.]

**Your questionnaire can be completed by either the male or female head of your household.** The survey takes most people about 20 minutes to complete and does not require any special knowledge – we just ask that you consider each question and respond with your own opinion.

Your name and address will be kept separate from your responses. Only your responses will be provided to the researchers for analysis. The identification number on the back of the survey is there so that XXXXXXXXXXXX, a survey firm hired to assist us, can check your name off when the questionnaire is returned. If you have any questions, please call XXXXXXXXXXXX at XXXXXXXXXXXX toll-free at 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

Thank you for your help, and please remember to complete all the questions. When the results are analyzed, we will send you a postcard listing a web site where you can see a summary of the results.

Sincerely,

Dan Lew and Brian Garber-Yonts  
Project Directors  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration