



日本自然保護協会

THE NATURE CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF JAPAN

September 16, 2014

Your Excellency Caroline Kennedy
The Ambassador of the United States of America

Dear Ambassador Kennedy

To begin, I would like to express my deepest appreciation and highest respect for your significant contribution to enhancing the strong bond between our two nations.

Today, I am writing on behalf of the Nature Conservation Society of Japan, an environmental conservation organization in Japan who has been conducting series of marine surveys in Henoko and Oura Bay for twelve years. I would like to ask you to pay special attention to the current status of the serious environmental situation off the coast of Henoko area in Okinawa. This is where the Okinawa Defense Bureau (ODB) has recently started drilling surveys for the construction of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF).

Our organization and 'Team Zan of the Association to Protect Northernmost Dugong' invited two prominent international experts on dugong and seagrass, Dr. Ellen Hines of San Francisco State University and Dr. Lemnuel Aragones of the University of the Philippines, to conduct a comprehensive monitoring survey on dugong feeding trails in the area of Henoko and Oura Bay. Originally our survey with Dr. Hines and Dr. Aragones was planned on August 22nd and 23rd, 2014.

Our plan to conduct a comprehensive survey was triggered by the results of our recent fact-finding scientific surveys regarding the habitual behavior of the endangered dugong population in this area. From last May until mid-July, we have found and have recorded more than 150 dugong feeding trails at area off the Camp Schwab in the area of Henoko and Oura Bay. These survey records are obvious scientific evidence that strongly calls for further comprehensive and long-termed surveys in the area.

However, these areas now fall within the "Temporarily Restricted Waters" recently established by the Japanese government in mid-July. In order for us to conduct a comprehensive monitoring survey in the Temporarily Restricted Water Areas, thus we submitted an application letter for official permission of the survey to Lieutenant General John Wissler, Commanding General, III Marine Expeditionary Force, and US Military Okinawa Area Coordinator of the U.S. Forces in Japan (USFJ) on July 28th. I attach with this letter a copy of this application for your further reference.



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During this submission process, we faced difficulties in reaching Lt. General Wissler directly. This was due to the fact that we could not receive appropriate contact information for him from the USFJ. During this process, we learnt that Major General Charles Hudson, Commanding General, Marine Corps Installations Pacific is in charge of this issue; accordingly we resent our application letter for official permission to him.

Our request for conducting scientific survey, which is based on pure scientific evidence mentioned above, was however declined by Colonel Christopher B. Snyder, Deputy Commander, Marine Corps Installations Pacific in his letter sent to us dated on August 15th.

We, the Nature Conservation Society of Japan, would like to express our deepest regret to you for this decision made by the USFJ.

The area of Henoko and Oura Bay is a rich natural environment. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has adopted recommendations three times, calling for the conservation of the dugong inhabiting the area. The population of the Dugong in Okinawa is especially valuable since it is the northern most population of the Dugong species in the world. We would like you to reconsider the importance of scientific research on the Dugong in the area. If the current situation, where drilling surveys are carried out with no independent scientific surveys on the dugong allowed, important scientific knowledge and truth about the behavior of the dugong would be lost forever. It is imperative that sound, unbiased surveys are conducted.

As good allies and partners for peace and nature, the United States and Japan have been cooperating for the conservation of natural environments and endangered species for long time. This has been done in collaboration with the United Nations and international scientific communities. We believe this particular decision made by the USFJ is completely contrary to the spirit of our two allies. We would not to consent this decision and ask your special attention to and reconsideration on this profound problem.

Most sincerely,

Dr. Akira Kameyama
Chairman of the Board of Director
The Nature Conservation Society of Japan