日本自然保護協会
THE NATURE CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF JAPAN

Handout 2-E

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III Marine Expeditionary Force
US Military Okinawa Area Coordinator
Lieutenant General John Wissler

The Nature Conservation Society of Japan
Chairman of the Board of the Directors
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Letter of Request for Permission to Enter and Conduct Research in the Restricted Water Areas in Henoko and Oura Bay established for the Construction of the FRF

The area of Henoko and Oura Bay in Nago city, Okinawa, is a biodiversity rich marine environment. The dugong, designated as a "critically endangered (IA)" species by the Japanese Ministry of the Environment, stands out as one of the integral elements of this area's biodiversity.

The Okinawa Defense Bureau conducted its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the construction and operation of the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) in this area. We hold the view that the Bureau's EIA as a whole was flawed, lacking scientific validity.

The Bureau's EIA predicts that "Considering the range of movement of the dugongs and the utilization of seagrass beds as feeding grounds by the dugongs, the probability that the dugong will move to feed on the seagrass beds along the Henoko Bay area is small."

While there were no reports from 2005 through 2008 of dugongs utilizing the area, the Bureau's own survey reports indicated that the dugong had begun to use the area in 2009, and have since gradually increased their usage of the area. Moreover, according to results of citizens' surveys conducted from May through July 2014, more than 110 dugong feeding trails were found in the area during a period of just these two months. Other reports also show that the dugong uses areas near the reclamation/construction site. We now hold the view that these survey results and records challenge and overturn the predictions made in the Bureau's EIA.

To develop and implement effective measures for the future conservation of the dugong, it is particularly important to know how frequently the dugong come to the planned construction site and what types/species of seagrass they prefer to feed upon. It is also important that the mitigation/conservation measures proposed in the EIA incorporate necessary changes, according to the actual situation found through valid scientific research.

We plan to conduct research on dugong feeding trails and seagrass beds in the construction site where dugong feeding trails have been found recently. Our research team will be headed by two invited international dugong experts, Dr. Ellen Hines and Dr.

Lemunel V. Agagones. Furthermore, members of the Nature Conservation Society of Japan and of the Team Zan of the Assocation to Protect the Northernmost dugong will also join the team as researchers. The NACS-J and Team Zan have been conducting surveys on dugong feeding trails and seagrass in Japan for many years.

The Okinawa dugong is the northernmost dugong of all dugong species in the world. It is of global importance to know the status and behavior of the Okinawa dugong.

Therefore, we would like to request your permission to enter and conduct research in the newly established “temporarily restricted water areas” for the construction of the FRF.