

JOIINT NGO STATEMENT

Iruka & Kujira Action Network
Greenpeace Japan
etc.

The “Bill On the Implementation of Cetacean Scientific Research for the Resumption of Commercial Whaling” (translation by IKAN) is a non-partisan bill that was first drafted by the opposition Democratic Party, but now aims to be passed by this Diet (Japanese Parliament) during their June session.

The objectives of the bill, as written, are to:

1. Develop the Japan’s fisheries industry through implementation of commercial whaling, and
2. Contribute to the sustainable use of marine organism resources.

However, the actual intent of the bill is to:

1. Secure multi-year funding for research whaling
2. Build a new whaling “mothership” to continue research whaling
3. Roll out promotion campaigns for these specific industries using public funds, and
4. Toughen immigration controls on foreign activists and shun global opinion.

There are two primary problems with the bill.

The first is that the resumption of commercial whaling, which is explicitly stated in the bill’s objectives, does not benefit Japan in any way.. Even if Japan continues to conduct research whaling, as a nation Japan cannot obtain consent from the international community: it is impossible to secure over 3/4 of the votes at the International Whaling Commission that would be needed in order to approve the resumption of whaling.¹

The second is that Japan’s scientific basis for its whaling program is seriously questioned internationally.

Originally, research whaling was designed to sustain itself through the revenue from sales of whale meat. However, due to the decline in whale meat consumption in Japan, the high operating costs of conducting a research whaling program were no longer able to be recovered, and as a result the Institute of Cetacean Research, the main oversight body of the research, became insolvent. It is clear that the whaling industry cannot be economically viable, given the current low demand for the meat. Research whaling in Antarctica is only possible by the government injecting large amounts of public funds.²

‘Scientific reseach’ at first may sound like a good contribution to international knowledge, but the research program is based on lethal catches of whales. It has been 70 years since the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling concluded. Meanwhile, the environment for whaling operations has changed, and non-lethal research technologies have advanced.

More than 20 resolutions asking Japan to cease or reevaluate Japan's research whaling have been adopted at the International Whaling Commission (IWC). Furthermore, the International Court of Justice ruled in 2014 that Japan's research whaling operation in Antarctica failed to show that it was for the purpose of scientific research, and concluded that it violated the international agreement.

In response, Japan resubmitted its draft plans for research whaling operations in Antarctica and in the Northwestern Pacific Ocean, but these have also been severely criticised by the IWC Scientific Committee Experts Panel.

The proposed bill ignores the current controversies surrounding the operations, attempts to shut out criticism, and is designed only to continue research whaling no matter what the cost – to either the whales, Japan's international reputation, or to the Japanese taxpayer.

Consequently, if this flawed bill goes ahead, our tax money will be spent on these wasteful programs every year, whilst damaging our relationships with otherwise friendly nations, and disgracing ourselves internationally. The Fisheries Agency currently appropriates 5 billion yen annually for the research whaling budget. This amount exceeds the 4.6 billion yen that is allocated for resource assessment for Japan's entire coastal fisheries. If this bill passes, more public funds will be invested, and not only the development of the fisheries industry but also all other fisheries operations will suffer. It has no connection to Japan's national interests. We cannot let such a bill pass.

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1. Moratorium on commercial whaling adopted in 1982 – requires $\frac{3}{4}$ votes to overturn the rule.
 2. The top three major whaling companies from the commercial whaling era, Maruha, Nissui, and Gokuyo announced in 2008 that they would not reenter the whaling enterprise. (Asahi Shimbun. June 14th, 2008)
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Animal Rights Center

Choices for tomorrow(CFT)

Circle of Life

Citizens Against Chemicals Pollution

A life in Viable Environment(ALIVE)

Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund(JTEF)

PEACE (Put an End to Animal Cruelty and Exploitation)

Save the Dugong Campaign Center

Biodiversity Information Box

Voice for Zoo animals Japan

Japan Civil Network for the UNDB

Greenpeace Japan

IKAN

Help Animals (added on June 27 2017)

Japan Wildlife Conservation Society (added on June 27 2017)

<Support NGOs>

ILPC

Campaign Whale

The Whaleman Foundation

Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

M.E.E.R.

legaSeas (Ocean Preservation For Future Generations)

Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC)

Pro Wildlife

Schutzstation Wattenmeer

Earth Island Institute

Greenpeace International

Animal Welfare Institute

Fundación Conservaré

Centro de Conservacion Cetacea

Cetacean Society International