United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
1011 E. Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

IN REPLY REFER TO:

AFES/MMM

JAN 17 2013

Mr. William "Randy" Reed
Permits and Regulatory Compliance
CGGVeritas
2450 Cinnabar Loop
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Dear Mr. Reed:

Thank you for your request submitted on behalf of CGGVeritas (Veritas) to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) dated December 14, 2012, requesting a Letter of Authorization (LOA) for the incidental take of polar bears for the Dalton 3D seismic program for oil and gas exploration.

On January 16, 2012, we received your request to withdraw your intentional take request. Hence, enclosed is an LOA (13-04), granting Veritas authorization to take small numbers of polar bears incidental to oil and gas industry exploration activities at the locations identified in your LOA request that are within the geographical region of the Beaufort Sea Incidental Take Regulations.

Activities will occur within the defined area of the Dalton 3D project located along the Sagavanirktok River drainage in the vicinity west and north of Franklin Bluffs. If additional seismic prospects outside of the area previously identified are developed during the 2013 winter/spring season you are requested to notify the Service of their locations prior to the planned operation. This will allow us to evaluate the activity and, if appropriate, to amend your LOA.

Historic polar bear denning activity reveals that polar bear denning habitat occurs along creek cutbanks and river bluffs. For example, approximately 1782 miles (2870 km) of potential polar bear denning habitat is located between the Colville River and the Canning River alone. Disturbance during denning could lead to abandonment of dens and possible mortality to cubs. Seismic vibroseis activities occurring near preferred denning habitat may encounter denning polar bears. The Service seeks to limit disturbance to maternal polar bear den sites, both known dens and those areas that could possibly be preferred by denning polar bears. With this in mind, please use caution when operating near these areas during the maternal denning period (mid November to mid April).

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The U.S. Geological Survey has posted information regarding polar bear denning habitat including the polar bear den habitat GIS coverage. The den habitat map (ARC/INFO export file), the mapping manuscript (PDF file) and a picture of den habitat (JPG file) are now available for downloading on the Alaska Science Center website (*http://alaska.usgs.gov/science/biology/polar_bears/pubs.html*). Please use these resources when planning activities in potential denning areas. You must contact us within 24 hours if any dens are found during your activities. You must also: 1) provide copies of the polar bear observation form to all Veritas contractors operating under the LOA; and 2) report any polar bear sightings or signs to this office by phone, FAX, or email using the polar bear observation form. If questions or concerns arise during the project period, Service biologists are available for consultation at the phone numbers listed below, and noted in your interaction plan.

Further, the Service has completed intra-Service consultation under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA), on the issuance of this LOA and has determined that the issuance this LOA is not likely to jeopardize the continuing existence of polar bears and is not likely to destroy or adversely modify polar bear critical habitat if designated. Therefore, no additional authorization under the ESA is required.

This authorization is issued in accordance with MMPA Incidental Take Regulations published in the *Federal Register* (76 FR 47010), dated August 3, 2011. Please review these regulations. If you should have any further questions, please contact Mr. Craig Perham, at (907) 786-3810, or Mr. Christopher Putnam, at (907) 786-3844, of our Marine Mammals Management Office.

Sincerely,

Acting Chief, Marine Mammals Management

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Richard Shideler, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (Email)
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement
North Slope Borough, Department of Law

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION
(13-04)

ISSUED: February 1, 2013
EXPIRES: June 30, 2013

CGGVeritas (Veritas) is hereby authorized to take small numbers of polar bears incidental to activities occurring during the 2013 Dalton 3D winter/spring seismic survey program. Activities for this project are discussed in detail in the *Plan of Operations, 2013 Winter Seismic Survey, Dalton 3D, North Slope, Alaska, State Lands and Waters* received with your application packet.

This Letter of Authorization (LOA) is subject to the following conditions:

1. The Operations Manager, or equivalent, must be fully aware of, understand and be capable of implementing the conditions of this authorization.

2. This authorization is valid only for those activities identified in the request for a Letter of Authorization dated December 14, 2012.

3. The polar bear interaction plan, *APPENDIX B, Field Operating Procedure, Polar Bear Protocol* and *APPENDIX C, Polar Bear Awareness and Interaction Plan*, is approved and all provisions unless specifically noted are incorporated into this authorization by reference. A copy of the current polar bear interaction plan must be available on site for all personnel.

4. Intentional take is not authorized under this LOA.

5. Polar bear monitoring, reporting, and survey activities will be conducted in accordance with 50 CFR 18, section 18.128. The basic monitoring and reporting requirements follow:

   - Veritas must cooperate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), and other designated Federal, State, or local agencies to monitor the impacts of oil and gas activities on polar bears.

   - Veritas must not conduct activities that operate nor pass within one mile (approximately 1600 meters) of known polar bear dens, and all observed dens

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must be reported to the Service within 24 hours of discovery. Should occupied dens be identified within one mile of activities, Veritas must cease work within the immediate area and contact the Service for guidance. The Service will evaluate these instances on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriate action. Potential actions may range from cessation or modification of work to conducting additional monitoring, and Veritas must comply with any additional measures specified.

- Veritas must designate a qualified individual or individuals to observe, record, and report the effects of the activity on polar bears and must report evidence of polar bears such as tracks, carcass, or scat to the Service within 24 hours of visual observation.

- Veritas must allow the Service to have an observer on site to monitor the impacts of its activity on polar bears, at the discretion of the Service.

- Veritas must submit an annual monitoring report to the Service as required under 50 CFR 18.128(f), which will be received no later than 90 days after the expiration date of the LOA.

This Letter of Authorization is valid for the period indicated on this authorization, unless extended or terminated in writing by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine Mammals Management Office.

Acting Chief, Marine Mammals Management

JAN 17 2013

Date