



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

911 NE. 11th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97232-4181

IN REPLY REFER TO:

FWS/R1/03506/Response

APR 30 2007

Mr. Gerald W. Winegrad
1328 Washington Drive
Annapolis, Maryland 21403

Dear Mr. Winegrad:

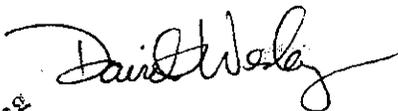
Your March 7, 2007, letter to Mrs. Laura Bush, regarding lead-based paint and albatross chicks on Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, has been referred to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for response. We appreciate your sustained dedication to seeking a solution to this problem.

You may be aware that during 2006, we started work toward removing or encapsulating lead-based paint from a variety of structures on Sand Island. I am pleased to report twelve buildings were treated during this initial phase, a considerable accomplishment given the funding available to us last year. I am also pleased to inform you that for 2007, the Fish and Wildlife Service has allocated \$250,000 toward this critical project. Using our on-island staff and equipment, we will be able to treat more buildings this year. We will continue to treat those buildings identified as most dangerous to the chicks as our highest priority.

We fully realize that the American Bird Conservancy, and others feel that our progress on this issue has been slow. Although we agree with your concern that this issue needs resolution, we have been unable to successfully compete for the funds needed to treat the problem more quickly. For that reason, and in support of our mutual concerns on this topic, administration officials from the Department of Interior, and the President's Council on Environmental Quality, continue to discuss this problem with the Department of Defense. If additional funding is received from the Department of Defense, we will mount a larger and shorter term project to fully address this long-standing problem.

We hope to have more information to share with you in the near future. Thank you for your continued interest in the albatrosses of Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge.

Sincerely,


Acting Regional Director