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Dear Members of .38 Special,

December 26, 2013

We at Sea Shepherd Conservation Society USA are writing to thank you for your compassionate and informed decision to cancel your performance at SeaWorld's upcoming "Bands, Brews & BBQ" events. As the documentary "Blackfish" continues to send shockwaves across the captive marine mammal industry, the eyes of the public are being opened to the truth behind the shiny public image created by SeaWorld and other marine parks...and the truth is that **captivity kills**.

We are aware that SeaWorld has invited you to visit their parks to "see firsthand how their animals are treated." Before you make your decision, we would like to extend an invitation to you as well. We invite you to visit our Cove Guardians standing along the shores of Taiji, Japan to witness firsthand the dark secret that SeaWorld and the rest of the captive industry do not want you to know: **the inextricable link between the slaughter of dolphins and small whales and the captive industry.**

Each year, approximately 20,000 dolphins, porpoises and small whales are killed in small villages throughout Japan. Taiji's annual hunt is the most well known among them, having first gained notoriety due to the release of Sea Shepherd's undercover photos and videos in 2003 and Director Louis Psihoyos' amazing film, The Cove, in 2009. Men from Taiji Fishermen's Union drive in entire families, or pods, of cetaceans using banger boats and poles to create a "wall of sound" which disorients and frightens the sound-sensitive animals. These families will not leave one another, especially while in distress. The "fishermen" exploit this, driving them closely together toward the deadly cove until there is no escape. Once netted off, these families are brutally slaughtered, and their flesh is sold for meat. Juveniles and infants are frequently dumped back out at sea, where they rarely survive on their own.

The slaughter, however, would not continue without the captive industry, of which SeaWorld is a large part. In Taiji, prior to the slaughter, dolphin trainers and killers work side-by-side to search for animals deemed suitable for sale to marine parks – the "prettiest" (those without nicks or scars) dolphins and whales. The captive prisoners are further tortured by witnessing the death of their families right before their eyes. The captives are transported to aquariums, some in Taiji and some around the world. Our Cove Guardians have documented that captive selection occurs simultaneously with the slaughter. Forced to abide by Japanese laws so they can remain in Japan to document this genocide, the Cove Guardians stand watch at the cove, exposing these atrocities. They live stream the drives, slaughter and captive selections at www.livestream.seashepherd.org.

We cannot thank you enough for heeding the many voices for these dolphins and whales, and canceling your SeaWorld performance. We hope you will now join us in Taiji to learn why SeaWorld is part of the reason why these animals are brutally hunted. We will follow up soon to gauge your interest in this offer. Should you wish to reach out to us in the meantime, you can reach us at (360) 370-5650. For more information on the Cove Guardians and Sea Shepherd's Operation Infinite Patience campaign, please visit www.seashepherd.org/coveguardians.

Thank you for caring about the dolphins!
For the oceans,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan F. Hartland".

Susan Hartland, Administrative Director
Sea Shepherd Conservation Society USA

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