



27 February 2019

Ms. Chana Gazit  
Producer  
CBS News  
524 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10019

Ms. Gazit:

For 47 years, the International Marine Animal Trainers' Association (IMATA) has been comprised of the world's most qualified experts in marine mammal care and training. We know whales, dolphins, sea lions and others species so well because we are the people who work with them every day. I'm writing on behalf of our organization, to voice our deep concern about claims made by John Hargrove and other critics, which we understand will be featured on an upcoming episode of the CBS show "Whistleblower." Specifically, we take issue with allegations that SeaWorld mistreats its animals. We know, firsthand, these claims are false.

We attest not only to the quality of care animals receive at SeaWorld parks, but to the fact that their animals are enriched by the skills and efforts of their trainers. Treating animals in our care with the compassion and respect we would our own children is not only in our personal nature – it is our professional duty. Our members and community dedicate each day to providing and advancing the most effective, scientific and humane care of marine animals. So please understand our concern if you plan to elevate the voice of one disgruntled and self-serving individual detached from and outside of our professional community. This is irresponsible, deceiving and discredits the important and documented work of zoological professionals.

As independent experts with direct knowledge of the animal care best practices at SeaWorld and similarly-accredited institutions, we know that the more than 1,000 caregivers at SeaWorld Parks are among the very best and have helped set many standards for animal welfare.

Few can match the comprehensive efforts SeaWorld has made helping wild animals in need. Their financial contribution toward conservation efforts is impressive and often overlooked; to date, SeaWorld has rescued over 34,000 wild animals.

Any zoological institution will have critics, and SeaWorld is no different. Most of these critics are not veterinary or animal care experts; instead they are extremists driven by ideology, rather than experience in animal research, care and conservation. Moreover, if the allegations being made by Mr. Hargrove and others were truthful, SeaWorld would have failed in its biological operations decades ago. SeaWorld is not just an organization in good standing in the marine animal care community. It is acknowledged as a key member, is seen as one of the leaders and standard bearers, and fulfills the mission to provide exceptional care for the marine animals in their care and those that need help in the wild.

If CBS is open to my representing IMATA's viewpoint in your upcoming episode, I welcome the opportunity to speak with your producer or reporter to bring balance and truth to your show; please contact me directly via email at [executivedirector@imata.org](mailto:executivedirector@imata.org).

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Hurley".

William Hurley  
Executive Director, IMATA