STATEMENT REGARDING UNITED STATES POSITION ON PROP.3 TRANSFER THE IRRAWADDY DOLPHIN (*ORCAELLA BREVIROSTRIS*) FROM APPENDIX II TO APPENDIX I (THAILAND)

This document has been submitted by the United States of America.

In a notice published in the *Federal Register* on Wednesday, September 29, 2004, (69 FR 58184, 58188) announcing our tentative position on the referenced document we said:

> *Tentative U.S. negotiating position:*
> Undecided…

> The Standing Sub-committee on Small Cetaceans of the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission recently reviewed the status of this species and reported that densities appear to be low in most areas and several populations are believed to be seriously depleted. The Sub-Committee expressed concern about reports of live capture from small populations of the species… We will continue to investigate the information in the proposal and from other sources, with a view toward understanding the current level of illegal trade and the vulnerability of the species to extinction in the near term.

After further consideration and consultation, **we now SUPPORT** this draft proposal introduced by the Royal Thai Government for the following reasons:

Trade Criteria:

- The number of dolphinariums is growing in Southeast Asia, increasing the demand for the species. Irrawaddy are desirable for display because of their "charismatic appearance."

- Irrawaddy have a very low survival rate in captivity, most dying within the first 3-5 years. They are highly susceptible to death in capture and transport. Very few calves have been born in captivity and none are recorded to have survived into adulthood.

Biological Criteria:

- Group size in the wild can be as small as 2-3 or as high as 10-15, therefore removal of individuals for capture can have detrimental impacts on the population. Currently, there are five critically endangered populations.

Why an Appendix I listing?

- A CITES Appendix I listing would restrict international trade in this species to exceptional circumstances.