



March 18th, 2024

Ventura County Air Pollution Control District
Tyler Harris, Manager – Planning, Rules and Incentives
4567 Telephone Road, 2nd Floor
Ventura, CA 93003

RE: Letter of Commitment for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Opportunity “Reducing Ocean-Going Vessel Speeds - Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies (BWBS)”

Dear Mr. Harris:

On behalf of *The Benioff Ocean Science Laboratory*, I am submitting this letter of commitment in respect to the **Ocean-Going Vessel Speeds - Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies (BWBS)** implementation grant application for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) as part of the Inflation Reduction Act.

The Benioff Ocean Science Laboratory has been affiliated with this program since 2018 and an active partner since 2023. We strongly support the continuation and expansion of this program through the CPRG implementation grant application.

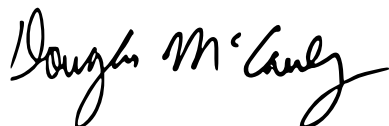
The BWBS program engages and enrolls large global shipping lines to motivate them to reduce speeds in key areas off the California coast to reduce air pollutant emissions, underwater noise, and the risk to whales. Since 2014, the program has achieved more than 150,000 metric tons of regional greenhouse gas emission reductions, over 4,400 tons of harmful oxides of nitrogen (NOx) emission reductions, and an estimated 44 percent decreased risk of fatal whale strikes during prime migration season in the targeted coastal areas. The BWBS program is readily expandable to other parts of the California coastal waters given the resources and local partners. A statewide vessel speed reduction program could cut greenhouse gas emissions significantly as part of a comprehensive effort to reduce emissions from ocean-going vessels. CPRG funding will allow the BWBS program to expand statewide and provide funds to increase outreach and develop partnerships with interested state and local agencies outside of California.

Our organization has created a platform called Whale Safe that compliments the BWBS program by providing near real-time whale and vessel data in the Vessel Speed Reduction (VSR) zones off California's coast. To help support the BWBS program with industry engagement and cooperation tracking, we have streamlined detailed reporting measures for each company enrolled in the BWBS program. These reports include a breakdown of detected whale activity and company fleet performance in an easy-to-interpret and digitized format. By creating these monthly reports, it gives enrolled companies visibility into their fleet's performance throughout the VSR season and allows them to conduct any internal communication and operation planning that may be needed to improve their overall cooperation. We look forward to continuing our support of the BWBS program by providing accurate and timely vessel and whale analytics for enrolled participants.

The Benioff Ocean Science Laboratory is pleased to support the **Ocean-Going Vessel Speeds - Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies (BWBS)** application and requests federal assistance to continue and expand the successful operation of this program and further reduce harmful air pollutants and impacts to wildlife along the California coast. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact *Douglas McCauley* at dmccauley@ucsb.edu

Sincerely,

Dr. Douglas McCauley
Director of the Benioff Ocean Science Laboratory
Associate Professor, EEMB at UC Santa Barbara

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Douglas McCauley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'D' and 'M'.