

Urgent: 209 fin whales are about to be killed. Tell Iceland's Ministers to ban cruel fin whale hunting.

August 30, 2023

To:
Svandís Svavarsdóttir
Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Iceland

Cc:
LiljaAlfre sdóttir
Minister of Culture and Business Affairs

Dear Minister Svavarsdóttir,

As concerned citizens of a planet in peril, we stand in solidarity with the Icelandic community and are writing to urge you to stay on the right side of history by not allowing the cruel hunting of fin whales to continue in September.

We are grateful that on June 20th, you made the brave decision to pause whaling in Iceland until the end of August, sparing the lives of up to 209 fin whales.

The foreign film industry invests more than one hundred million USD in Iceland each year. It's with this in mind that we, the below artists and advocates, express our deep concern about the potential resumption of whaling in September.

We understand your ministry is faced with a difficult political decision, whether to allow Kristján Loftsson to resume hunting fin whales in September or not. Scientifically, ethically, and morally, the decision should not be difficult.

Fin whale populations were decimated by nearly 90% due to commercial whaling in the last 150 years. Not only are fin whales an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act, and listed as vulnerable under IUCN, but they are also critical to the health of our oceans.

Whales are a keystone species that help fertilize the oceans, promoting phytoplankton growth through iron in their feces. The oceans are the lungs of the world, providing half the oxygen we breathe, and they are the largest carbon sink on the planet. Fin whales play a significant role in both creating oxygen and sequestering carbon.

Ralph Chami, a former IMF director, has estimated that great whales like the fin whale are worth up to \$3,000,000 in their lifetime for their role in carbon sequestration. To put it simply, one great whale does the work of 1,500 trees.

The world has had a moratorium on commercial whaling for almost forty years. Iceland, Norway, and Japan are the only countries that are engaged in commercial whaling today, and Iceland is the only country that hunts fin whales.

In a poll this spring, more than half of Icelanders want whaling to end. Less than 2% of the whale meat, hunted around Iceland's shores, is consumed in Iceland. Almost all the meat is

shipped to Japan, and it's reported that Kristján Loftsson's company loses millions every year he goes whale hunting. Killing whales in Iceland is not done to feed the nation, or for profit.

Recently Kristján Loftsson has been spreading false propaganda claiming that whales are harmful to the climate. Why is Iceland turning a blind eye to an industry of no benefit to the country, that is damaging both the ecosystem and Iceland's reputation?

The world is watching and we urge you to make the right decision again. Svandís, please stay on the right side of history. If the Ministry allows Kristján Loftsson to start whaling again in September, we will not bring our projects to Iceland.

Sincerely,

Jason Momoa

James Cameron

Darren Aronofsky

Sir Peter Jackson

Dame Fran Walsh

Dame Jane Champion

Hillary Swank

Sir Charles Dance

Asa Butterfield

Shailene Woodley

Piper Perabo

Amber Valletta

Ashlan Cousteau

Philippe Cousteau

Alfre Woodard

Joe Stechay

Madelaine Petsch

Genesis Butler

William Gerber

Eric Christian Olsen

Amy Smart

Drew Fitzgerald

Nikki Reed

Maya Penn

Isaias Hernandez

Pattie Gonia

Debbie Levin

Bonnie Wright

John Quigley

Anthony Dickenson

Carla Shamberg

Hart Bochner

Richard Gunn

Shane West

Christofer Gessner

Brandon Boyd

Sarah Hay

Shiloh Fernandez

Yadira Guevara-Prip

Nesta Cooper

Trieste Kelly Dunn

Philipa Boyens

Houston King

Francis Lawrence

Samara Weaving

Archie Madekwe

Hoon Lee

Olivia Cheng

Jihae Kim

Rajan Mehta

Rachel Kropa

Anna Laevski

Robert Read

Erin Culley

Sara Murray

Tom Riley

Stephen Ronaan

Heather Courtney

Robert Dupree

Ray Halbritter

Heidi Ward

Jack Donnelly

Elysabeth Alfano

Sylvia Hoeks

Omid Jalili

Maz Jobrani

Trish Summerville

Lauren Glazier

Jonathan Trooper

Stephen Lang

Phoebe Tonkin

Jess McNamee

Adam Met

Laurette Schillings

Francis Magee

Lizzy Caplan

Peter Van Auker

Hudson Leick

Carice van Houten