

KIM BASINGER

August 16, 2013

His Excellency Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin
President of Russia
The Kremlin
23 Ilyinka St. Moscow 103132
Russia

Dear Mr. President,

I was thrilled to learn that the 18 beluga whales who were slated to be transported from the Utrish Marine Mammal Research Station to a U.S. aquarium will remain in Russia and out of my home state of Georgia. The whales would have had a bleak life if they had been shipped to Georgia for public display. At least four belugas and two whale sharks have already died at the Georgia Aquarium in recent years. As an ardent supporter of marine life, I commend you for your efforts to preserve this magnificent species. Now that these whales will not be transferred to the U.S., I urge you to take the next step and ensure that they are returned to their rightful ocean home.

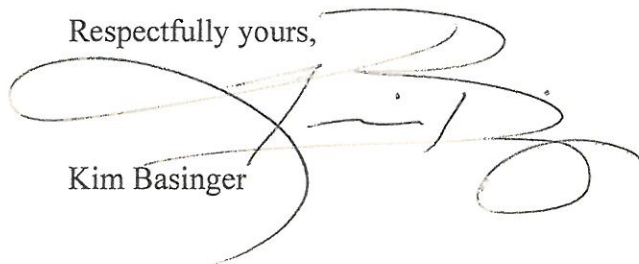
The long-term survival of belugas increases dramatically in their natural habitat. U.S. officials, in making the decision to prohibit the importation of these belugas, determined that the live-capture trade may have contributed to the species' decline and that allowing belugas to be shipped for public display would only increase demand for these animals to the detriment of the species. The U.S. documentary, *Blackfish*, has also generated international criticism of marine parks such as SeaWorld and aquariums that continue to confine whales to small concrete tanks, despite our knowledge of how painful and harmful such confinement is to these complex animals.

The plight of these whales has the whole world watching to see what will happen next. I urge you to help return these belugas to their families in the ocean. Will you take a strong unequivocal stand in favor of marine animals by initiating the rehabilitation-and-release process?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Kim Basinger

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim Basinger', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with large loops and a long horizontal stroke.