

[Sample letter] This letter can be sent to a Senator or Congress-person (it works for both). A hand-written letter will be the most personal and touching, but you can also print the edited letter.

Friendly tip: If there is something that your legislator did that you appreciate, such as supporting previous legislation, it's nice to open with: *"First, I would like to thank you for _____ (include details)."*

IMPORTANT: Please edit the red text. Blue text can be included or removed. Remove all orange text prior to sending your letter.

Dear **[Representative or Senator]** _____ ,

As your constituent I kindly ask that you consider co-sponsoring the SWIMS Act (originally introduced in 2022 as HR 8514 and S. 4740 in the Senate). This bill would amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the Animal Welfare Act. This amendment will strengthen our animal welfare laws by prohibiting the taking, importation, exportation, and breeding of certain cetaceans for public display, and for other purposes. These majestic marine mammals should be observed and cherished in their natural habitat where they belong - not in captivity.

The SWIMS Act is cosponsored by Representatives Carolyn B. Maloney (D-N.Y.), Rick Larsen (D-Wash.), Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.), Tony Cárdenas (D-Calif.), and Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.). In the Senate of the United States: Mrs. Feinstein (for herself, Mr. Booker, Mr. Wyden, Ms. Duckworth, Mr. Markey, Mr. Padilla, and Ms. Warren) introduced the SWIMS Act; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Option to personalize the letter further and include your concerns for captive cetaceans. Editable summaries below of Tokitae/Corky that you can include - or write your own.

I truly hope you'll consider supporting the SWIMS Act.

I would also like to express my concern for captive cetaceans. Tokitae aka "Lolita" was a Southern Resident Orca violently taken from her family in the Salish Sea in 1970. She was forced to live in the smallest tank in North America [at Miami Seaquarium] for nearly 53 years. The first ten years of Tokitae's captivity were spent with a tank mate named Hugo. He died of a brain aneurysm after repeatedly ramming his head into the wall of the tank. Sadly, on August 18, 2023 Tokitae died before being relocated to a seaside sanctuary in the Salish Sea.

Corky is a Northern Resident Orca - captured 9 months prior to Tokitae. Today, Corky swims in circles inside one of SeaWorld's tiny tanks. Members of her pod (her family) still swim freely in the ocean. Since her capture in 1969, Corky has only known a life of deprivation, suffering, and loss. We have seen the evidence with our own eyes - orcas mourn the loss of their young. Corky gave birth 7 times - none of her babies survived past two months. Corky has been attacked in her tank and thankfully survived, though the attacking orca did not. Her life has been full of heartache and pain. Like Tokitae, Corky has lived in a tiny tank for 53+ years and deserves the chance to live out the rest of her days in a seaside sanctuary. Hopefully our support will help get her there.

Miami Seaquarium has been in the news again for a negative USDA inspection report. Please consider including the paragraph below and express your concerns for the captive cetaceans at this location (in addition to any other locations you may want to mention).

Please consider including the additional text below (in blue) to keep pressure on the USDA. Remove orange text before sending your letter.

Representatives have provided their thoughts on the SWIMS Act. Please consider including the quotes below (in blue).

Regarding the SWIMS Act:

Rep. Adam Schiff: *“Whales are among the most intelligent, fascinating, and beautiful creatures in the world,” “And they deserve to live freely in their natural habitats – not in captivity where their lives are defined by the four walls of a concrete tank.”*

Co-author Senator Dianne Feinstein: *“The conditions these whales live in contribute to far shorter lifespans – captive orcas typically live just 12 years compared to 40 years in the wild – and there is significant evidence that captivity is excruciating for these mammals. SeaWorld announced in 2016 that its current orcas in captivity will be its last; the federal government should expand on this example and prohibit all new captive whales for purposes of entertainment.”*

Rep. DelBene: *“The science is clear – when these marine mammals and other large whales are kept in captivity, they are often exploited, treated poorly, or abused.”*

Rep. Huffman: *“The science and tragic real-life experiences have shown us time and again that marine mammals suffer from being in captivity - often being exploited and abused. But our laws and practices don’t reflect that. We need to finally make the humane changes that have been needed for decades.”*

Thank you for considering my request. (You can add a more personal end-note here)

Sincerely,

[name, mailing address, email address]