

**SeaWorld Emergency Shareholder Meeting**  
**Topic: *Blackfish* vs. Seaworld**  
**October 16, 2014**

**I. Background**

On July 19, 2013, the documentary film *Blackfish* was released. It focused largely on a single orca named Tilikum that is currently owned by SeaWorld, and held at SeaWorld Orlando. Tilikum was involved in three deaths. The first death, in 1991, was a part-time trainer at Sealand of the Pacific, which owned Tilikum. It was following this death, and the resulting closing of Sealand of the Pacific, that SeaWorld purchased Tilikum. The second death occurred in 1999 when a man stayed after the park closed and climbed into Tilikum's tank. He was found dead in the tank the next day, although it is unknown what involvement the orca had in the death. The third death occurred in 2010, when Tilikum pulled a trainer into his tank and killed her. *Blackfish* alleges that this is not normal behavior for orcas, and that these deaths are a direct result of how SeaWorld treats the orcas under its care.

**II. Effects**

Since the release of *Blackfish*, SeaWorld has become widely criticized for its treatment of its captive orcas. Initially, there was little effect on park attendance. In the past few months, however, the amount of visitors to the parks has fallen greatly, as has revenues. Over the past year, SeaWorld stocks have fallen 22%. In addition, Southwest, a long time partner of SeaWorld, announced that it would not be renewing its partnership with SeaWorld. A class action lawsuit has also been filed against the company, claiming that investors were misled over the effects *Blackfish* was having on the company.

SeaWorld released a letter refuting many of the claims made by the documentary. This letter, however, has drawn criticisms as well. In addition, SeaWorld has announced plans to greatly change the orca habits, in an effort to better meet the needs of the animals. This plan isn't set to be put into place until 2018, and has been criticized as acting too slowly.

**III. Questions to Consider**

1. Are there national or international laws pertaining to this issue?
2. What methods should be implemented in the short-term and long-term to ensure the protection of sea animals?
3. What problems will occur among shareholders of SeaWorld?

**IV. Grading**

- Creativity in Solutions
- Participation and Cooperation
- Public Speaking with Solid Ideas and Details
- Reflection on International Views