



September 18, 2007

Regarding: Coverage of Plants under the Global Warming Wildlife Survival Act Title of the Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act

Dear Senator/Representative:

The Native Plant Conservation Campaign (NPCC) is a project of the nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity. We are a nationwide network of native plant science and conservation organizations. Currently the NPCC network includes 38 affiliate native plant societies, botanic gardens, museums, and arboreta, representing more than 85,000 scientists and laypersons nationwide. NPCC affiliate organizations and their members work closely with state and federal agencies to manage and conserve native plants and ecosystems.

On behalf of our member groups and the other undersigned organizations, we thank Congress for addressing the impacts of climate change to wildlife and habitat in the Energy Policy Reform and Revitalization Act of 2007, H.R. 2337, now incorporated into the Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act under the Global Warming Wildlife Survival Act title. The need for coordinated federal action on climate change impacts to America's ecological resources has never been clearer.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has determined that at least 20 to 30 percent of the world's species may be threatened with extinction by predicted global warming. Global warming's effects are already apparent, and the need to collect information and take measures to conserve species at risk is pressing. Human societies and economies depend on healthy and diverse species and ecosystems for food, medicines and other essential products as well as countless services, including protection from flooding and other climate events. We welcome your recognition of this key aspect of the threats we face from climate change.

We commend the legislators for placing emphasis on the use of local native plant species in restoration and conservation projects under the legislation. The use of local species is critical to maintaining ecosystem health, species diversity, and successful land management.

However, we are extremely concerned that plants are specifically excluded from the planning, conservation and assessment measures provided under the Global Warming Wildlife Survival Act portion of the legislation. This legislation must protect our natural heritage in its entirety. It cannot be effective if it excludes the plant kingdom.

Plants are the foundations of ecosystems. As the bill correctly recognizes, they provide food and shelter for wildlife. However, they also perform other critical functions. Through photosynthesis, plants convert water and carbon dioxide into the oxygen we breathe and the sugars that provide the primary fuel for life. Through nitrogen fixation, plants generate proteins — basic building blocks of life. Without these and other plant-mediated processes, almost all life on this planet, including humans, would not exist.

Plants are also fundamental to the stability and prosperity of human societies and economies. They generate the oxygen we breathe, clean the water we drink, and produce foods, medicines, fibers and other invaluable commodities critical to human well being.

Plant conservation is crucial to any effective response to climate change. There is no scientific society and no scientific evidence supporting the contention that meaningful conservation of wildlife or their habitats can be accomplished in the absence of vigorous efforts to conserve plants.

If it is to achieve its goals, this groundbreaking legislation must extend its conservation measures to the plant kingdom.

Climate change will have an enormous impact on plant species and communities. More than 7,000 U.S. plant taxa are already recognized as imperiled by habitat destruction, invasive nonnative weeds, pests, and diseases, and other causes. However, the impacts of climate change may dwarf these threats. As sea levels rise, coastal plant habitat from Maine to Florida and from California to Washington, will disappear. As northern and high elevation ecosystems warm, previously abundant forest and alpine plant species will be placed at risk. These phenomena are currently being documented by scientists throughout the United States.

Such impacts not only put wildlife in these regions at risk, they also affect humans. Fire regimes will change, placing rural communities at risk. Many communities depend on mountain meadows and forests to clean and stabilize water supplies. Coastal areas depend on wetlands and estuaries for commercial fish, shellfish, recreation, and other industries as well as flood protection, water purification and supply. A recent study estimated that Florida wetlands are worth \$11.3 billion per year for storm protection alone. Hurricane severity and frequency are expected to change with the global climate. In order to understand and resist such threats, the plant kingdom simply must be assessed and conserved.

For all of these reasons, we urge that the definition of “wildlife” in the bill be modified to replace “fauna” with “flora and fauna.”

Sincerely,

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NPCC AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum * Arizona Native Plant Society * Arkansas Native Plant Society
* Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) * California Native Plant Society *
California Oak Foundation * Colorado Native Plant Society * Florida Native Plant Society *
Grand Prairie Friends of Illinois * Herb Society of America * Idaho Native Plant Society * Indiana
Native Plant and Wildflower Society * Iowa Native Plant Society * Kansas Native Plant Society *
Kauai Native Plant Society * Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center * Maryland Native Plant
Society * Minnesota Native Plant Society * Missouri Native Plant Society * Montana Native Plant
Society * Native Plant Society of New Jersey * Native Plant Society of New Mexico * Native
Plant Society of Northeastern Ohio * Native Plant Society of Oregon * Native Plant Society of
Texas* Native Prairies Association of Texas* New England Wild Flower Society (NH, CT, RI,
MA, ME, VT) * New Mexico Rare Plant Technical Council * North Carolina Botanical Garden *
North Carolina Wild Flower Preservation Society * Oklahoma Native Plant Society * South
Carolina Native Plant Society * Ticonderoga Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, VA * Utah
Native Plant Society * Virginia Native Plant Society * Washington Native Plant Society * West
Virginia Native Plant Society * Wyoming Native Plant Society