

February 6, 2017

Re: Oppose Ryan Zinke for Secretary of the Interior

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the undersigned groups and our millions of members and supporters, we write to express serious concern about the nomination of Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-MT) for Secretary of Interior. In the two short years he has been in Congress, Rep. Zinke has earned a three percent lifetime rating from the League of Conservation Voters, reflecting a consistent voting record against protecting America's public lands, waters and endangered species 97 percent of the time. Rep. Zinke has prioritized the narrow, short-term interests of corporate and extractive industries, championing dirty fossil fuel development on public lands while supporting significantly reduced environmental review of and public involvement in decisions about this development. Based on this record, we ask that you oppose his nomination.

As Secretary of Interior, Rep. Zinke would be responsible for managing hundreds of millions of acres of public land. Rep. Zinke's voting record suggests he will put corporate profits ahead of conservation and public involvement. His record includes voting to turn management of public land over to industry-dominated panels, while dispensing with environmental laws in order to ramp up unsustainable logging levels, voting to strip the president of authority to designate national monuments in seven western states, and voting to block the Bureau of Land Management from limiting harm to water, air and wildlife from hydraulic fracking. Rep. Zinke even voted against designating the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—an area of global environmental significance—as wilderness to protect it from oil and gas drilling.

Through oversight of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rep. Zinke would also have responsibility for implementation of the Endangered Species Act and the survival and recovery of our nation's more than 1500 threatened and endangered species. As with public lands, Rep. Zinke's record on endangered species hardly indicates he will be a champion for their survival. Rep. Zinke cast at least 21 votes against endangered species protections, including voting to remove endangered species protections for the gray wolf and to prevent protection for greater sage grouse, lesser prairie chicken and northern long-eared bats. Zinke also voted against tougher regulation of the ivory trade, which is driving catastrophic declines of African elephants. He also voted to block rules that would have prevented cruel and biologically indefensible "predator" hunting of wolves and bears and their young on national preserves and wildlife refuges in Alaska including aerial gunning of wolves and spotlighting denning bears and their cubs as they hibernate to boost populations of game species like moose and caribou.

Finally, as Secretary of Interior, Rep. Zinke would be responsible for overseeing mineral leasing on millions of acres across the country, including for oil and gas drilling and fracking and coal mining. Here too, there is cause for concern. The Congressman introduced legislation that would have lifted President Obama's moratorium on federal coal leasing, a significant contributor to U.S. carbon pollution, and stopped a review of the impacts of federal coal leasing on climate change and communities.

While we commend Rep. Zinke for publicly opposing giving away America's public lands to states or private interests, this does not lessen our concern over his record on management of these lands. The Secretary of Interior should be a steward of America's federal public lands and natural heritage for this and future generations. His short tenure in Congress demonstrates that his views are out of step with the majority of Americans who want to see our public lands protected from rapacious development, endangered species conserved and a livable climate future. For all of these reasons, we request your opposition to Rep. Zinke's nomination.

Sincerely,

The Center for Biological Diversity

Friends of the Earth

Center for Food Safety

Food and Water Watch

Sierra Club

Public Citizen

350.org

350 Eugene Oregon

California Wolf Center

Advocates for Snake Preservation

Californians for Western Wilderness

African Wild Dog Conservancy

Caney Fork Headwaters Association

Alameda Creek Alliance

Cascadia Wildlands

All Creatures

Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

Alliance for the Wild Rockies

Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation

Animal Legal Defense Fund

Center for Snake Conservation

Animal Protection League of New Jersey

Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge

Animal Welfare Institute

Citizens for Sludge-Free Land

Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.

Citizens United For Resources and

Animas Valley Institute

Environment, Inc.

Apalachicola Riverkeeper

Clean Air Watch

Apollo Kauai'i

Climate Law and Policy Project

BARK

Coast Range Association

Basin and Range Watch

Coastal Environmental Rights Foundation.

Battle Creek Alliance

Conservation Council for Hawai'i

Bay Area Labor Committee for Peace & Justice

CORALations

Basin and Range Watch

Cornucopia Network

Berkeley Partners for Parks

Conservation Congress

Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT)

Cottonwood Law Center

Beyond Nuclear

Cumberland Countians for Ecojustice

Bird Conservation Network

Daily Kos

Black Warrior Riverkeeper

Delaware Riverkeeper Network

Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project

Dogwood Alliance

Bold Visions Conservation

Eastern Coyote Research

Ecology Party of Florida

Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Small Animal Conservation
Fund
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Protection Information
Center
Eyak Preservation Council
Fairmont, Minnesota Peace Group
Food Empowerment Project
Friends of Blackwater
Friends of Merrymeeting Bay
Friends of the Clearwater
Friends of the West Shore in Tahoe
Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf & Wildlife
Fund for Wild Nature
Gas Free Seneca
Georgia ForestWatch
Geos Institute
Gila Conservation Coalition
Gila Resources Information Project
Global Owl Project
Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project
Greenaction for Health and Environmental
Justice
Growing Alternative Resource Development
and Enterprise Network
Gulf Restoration Network
Hands Across the Sand.org
Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate
Hells Canyon Preservation Council
Hoosier Environmental Council
Howling For Wolves
Humboldt Baykeeper
INFORM Colorado
Juniata Valley Audubon Society
Justice for Wolves
Kettle Range Conservation Group
Klamath Forest Alliance
KS Wild
KyotoUSA
Lane County Audubon Society
League of Humane Voters of New Jersey
Long Branch Environmental Education
Center
Los Padres ForestWatch
Maricopa Audubon Society's

Massachusetts Forest Rescue Campaign
Massachusetts Forest Watch
Moms Advocating Sustainability
Mt. Diablo Audubon Society
National Wolfwatcher Coalition
Native Plant Conservation Campaign
NC WARN
Network for Environmental & Economic
Responsibility of United Church of Christ
New York Environmental Law and Justice
Project
North County Watch
Northeast Oregon Ecosystems
Northwest Environmental Advocates
Northwest Environmental Defense Center
Ocean Conservation Research
One More Generation
Oso:ah Foundation
Partnership for Policy Integrity
Peace and Freedom Party, California
Pesticide Action Network
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Predator Defense
Raptors Are The Solution
RESTORE: The North Woods
Rocky Mountain Wild
Russian Riverkeeper
SafeEnergyAnalyst.org
San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society
San Juan Citizens Alliance
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
Santee Riverkeeper Alliance
Save Our Sky Blue Waters
Save The Colorado
Save the Frogs
Save the Pine Bush
Sciencecorps
Selkirk Conservation Alliance
Shoals Environmental Alliance
Sierra Club, Cumberland Chapter
Sky Island Alliance
SoCal 350 Climate Action
South Umpqua Rural Community
Partnership
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Southwest Environmental Law Center

Species' Forest, Inc.
Spokane Riverkeeper
Surfrider Foundation
Sustainable Arizona
Swan View Coalition
Tennessee Environmental Council
Texas Drought Project
The Center for Snake Conservation
The Ecology Center
The Fund for Wild Nature
The Lands Council
The Public Lands Project of the Rochester
Area Vegan Society
Turning Green
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition
Urban Bird Foundation
Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment
Ventana Wilderness Alliance
Western Watersheds Project
Wild and Scenic Rivers
Wild Horse Education
Wild Virginia
WildEarth Guardians
Wilderness Workshop
WildLands Defense
Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network
WildWest Institute
Yahi Group Sierra Club