

October 16, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
The Capitol S-128
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
The Capitol S-128
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we request that you provide the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the critical funding the agency desperately requires for endangered species conservation and recovery. Specifically, we urge you to adopt the funding levels in H.R. 3055, which the U.S. House of Representatives passed in June. This funding package will move the agency closer to being able to implement the Endangered Species Act in the way Congress intended when it dedicated our country to protecting the species and the habitats that need it most.

In May 2019, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service (IPBES) released a landmark global assessment that alarmingly concluded that “around 1 million species already face extinction, many within decades, unless action is taken to reduce the intensity of drivers to biodiversity loss.”¹ The report, backed by the United Nations and more than 130 countries around the world, reviewed around 15,000 scientific and government sources and drew from indigenous and local knowledge. It is the most comprehensive document ever prepared on the status and trends of biodiversity.

Fortunately, the United States arguably has the strongest conservation law in place to help combat this massive extinction crisis—the Endangered Species Act. Unfortunately, decades of underfunding by Congress have hamstrung the ability of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to recover many of the species under the care of the Act. Despite this chronic lack of funding, the law has still been incredibly successful, which is nothing short of a miraculous accomplishment and a true testament to its effectiveness. There is no question many more species could be fully recovered if Congress fully funded the Endangered Species Act.

Because funding drives recovery progress, it is essential to provide sufficient resources for the recovery program. H.R. 3055 provides nearly \$118 million for recovery initiatives – a \$23 million increase from FY2019 enacted levels. This level of funding is critical in order for the Service to address and alleviate the threats that caused a species to decline in the first place, including controlling invasive species, restoring degraded habitat, reducing illegal poaching, reintroducing new populations, and other forms of intensive management. Increased funding will ultimately get more species recovered more quickly and will reduce the amount of recovery work the Service will have to do down the road.

¹ S. Diaz, J. Settele, E. Brondizio. 2019. Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services available at: <https://www.ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment>

H.R. 3055 also provides a modest increase for the listing program. Listing a species is the single best means of averting extinction. The FWS seven-year listing workplan² details how the agency will prioritize the evaluation of over 350 species for listing and is supported by many stakeholders. At current funding rates, it will take the Fish and Wildlife Service at least 10 years to process all of the remaining species that the agency has identified as potentially needing protection under the Act. While we believe much more funding is needed to truly address this backlog, we support the House funding level of \$23.4 million and urge the Senate to adopt this increase.

We also fully support the funding increase in H.R. 3055 to the Planning and Consultation program, the Conservation and Restoration program, and the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund. The Planning and Consultation program includes key processes that ensure species receive fundamental protections while allowing flexibility for infrastructure and other forms of development. H.R. 3055 increases the program's budget by almost \$7 million, which will allow the Service to complete more consultations and Habitat Conservation Plans and ultimately help protect more species and their habitat.

The funding increase of \$2.25 million to the Conservation and Restoration program can help conserve species by improving their habitat and removing threats before they need to be listed. Early conservation action to ensure species are secure is much more cost-effective than waiting until species are on the brink of extinction. H.R. 3055 provides the Service with sufficient funding to help keep its 23 designated candidate species³ from needing the protections of the Act. Additionally, the \$10 million increase to the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund will provide states with much-needed funding to conserve species on private lands. At least half of all protected species spend a portion of their life cycle on private lands, so this boost in funding provides the resources to facilitate recovery by everyone.

Conserving our planet's natural heritage is a monumental challenge, but we can do more, and we know what to do for our most imperiled wildlife and plants. The facts have demonstrated that for nearly all endangered species, the only path to recovery has been through protection under the ESA. The more quickly species are listed, the more quickly recovery planning and recovery work can begin, and the faster species can be delisted as recovered. We urge you to adopt the increased funding levels in H.R. 3055 so that more species can be saved from extinction and can be recovered and delisted more quickly.

Sincerely,

Center for Biological Diversity
Defenders of Wildlife
Advocates for Snake Preservation
Alaska Wilderness Action
All-Creatures.org

² U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Listing Workplan, 7-year workplan (Sept . 2016) *available at:* <https://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/Listing%207-Year%20Workplan%20Sept%202016.pdf>.

³ See U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Candidate Species Report, *available at:* <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/candidate-species.html>.

Alpine Lakes Protection Society
American Bird Conservancy
American Indian Mothers Inc.
American Rivers
Animal Welfare Institute
Animals and Society Institute
Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.
Animas Valley Institute
Antelope Valley Conservancy
Appalachian Voices
Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Audubon Society of Corvallis
Basin and Range Watch
Battle Creek Alliance & Defiance Canyon Raptor Rescue
Bauman Foundation
Bay Area - System Change not Climate Change (BA-SCnCC)
Bedford Audubon Society
Bedford Co. Bird and Nature Club
Berkshire Environmental Action Team
Bird City Wisconsin
Bird Conservation Network
Black Canyon Audubon Society
Black Warrior Riverkeeper
Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project
Born Free USA
Boulder County Audubon Society
Boulder Rights of Nature
Bozeman Birders
Buffalo Field Campaign
Butterfly Farms.org
Cahaba River Society
California Native Plant Society
California Wolf Center
California Wildlife Foundation/California Oaks
Californians for Western Wilderness
Cascades Raptor Center
Cascadia Wildlands
Center for Food Safety
Center for Large Landscape Conservation
Center for Snake Conservation
Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage
Citizens Against Ruining the Environment
Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Citizens Climate Lobby
Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge
Citizens Environmental Coalition

Clean Water Action
Climate Justice Alliance
Climate Law & Policy Project
Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection
Coast Range Association
Coastal Plains Institute
Colorado Crane Conservation Coalition
Colorado Wild Rabbit Foundation
Columbus Zoo and Aquarium
Comite Pro Uno
Conservation Alabama
Conservation Congress
Conservation Northwest
Coosa Riverkeeper
CORALations
Cuidadanos Del Karso
Cumberland-Harpeth Audubon Society
Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families
Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society
Delaware Valley Ornithological Club
Desert Tortoise Council
Dogwood Alliance
Don't Waste Arizona
Earthjustice
Earthworks
Eastern Coyote/Coywolf Research
Eco-Eating
Ecology Party of Florida
Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Action Committee of West Marin
Environmental Committee for the San Lorenzo Valley
Environmental Investigation Agency
Environmental Protection Information Center
Evergreen Audubon
Eyak Preservation Council
Florida Conservation Voters
Food Democracy Now!
Food Empowerment Project
Footloose Montana
For the Fishes
Foundation Earth
Friends of Animals
Friends of Blackwater, Inc.
Friends of Merrymeeting Bay
Friends of the Bitterroot
Friends of the Clearwater

Friends of the Creeks
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the Eel River
Friends of the Locust Fork River
Friends of the Wild Whoopers
Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf & Wildlife
Fund for Wild Nature
Glynn Environmental Coalition
Golden West Women Flyfishers
Great Lakes Wildlife Alliance
Greater Hells Canyon Council
Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice
GreenLatinos
Greenpeace
Healthy Gulf
Hands Across the Sand/Land
Hawaii Preparatory Academy
Heartwood
High Country Audubon Society
Hills For Everyone
Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History
Hoosier Environmental Council
Houston Audubon
Howling For Wolves
Humboldt Baykeeper
In the Shadow of the Wolf
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
Iowa Audubon
James River Association
Juniata Valley Audubon Society
Justice for Wolves
Kairos Earth
Kettle Range Conservation Group
Klamath Forest Alliance
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
Kootenai Environmental Alliance
La Union Hace La Fuerza
Life of the Land
Los Angeles Audubon Society
Los Padres ForestWatch
Madison Audubon Society
Madrone Audubon Society
Maguari-One Zoo Consultants
Maine Audubon
Maricopa Audubon Society
Maryland Ornithological Society

Mass Audubon
Massachusetts Forest Watch
Miami Waterkeeper
Mid-Michigan Stewardship Initiative
Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter
Missouri Coalition for the Environment
Monmouth County Audubon Society
Monterey Audubon Society
MountainTrue
Birding Under Nevada Skies
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wolfwatcher Coalition
Native Plant Conservation Campaign
Natural Resources Defense Council
NC WARN
New Hampshire Audubon
New Mexico Wild
Northcoast Environmental Center
Northeast Oregon Ecosystems
Northern Catskills Audubon Society, Inc.
Northern Jaguar Project
Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society
Northwest Environmental Advocates
NY4WHALES
NYC Audubon
Ocean Conservation Research
Olympic Forest Coalition
One More Generation
Oregon Natural Desert Association
Orleans Audubon Society
Pacific Beach Coalition
Pasadena Audubon Society
Paulo Lane Action Network
Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology
People for Animal Rights
Peregrine Audubon Society
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Arizona Chapter
Port Crescent Hawk Watch
Prairie Dog Pals
Predator Defense
Prince George's County Audubon Society
Project Coyote
Public Citizen
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER)
Puget Soundkeeper
Raptor Services, LLC

Raptors Are The Solution
Reef Relief
Roaring Fork Audubon Society
Rockbridge Bird Club
Rocky Mountain Wild
Rootskeeper
Sacramento Audubon Society
Salem Audubon Society
San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society
San Diego Coastkeeper
San Fernando Valley Audubon Society
San Francisco Baykeeper
San Juan Citizens Alliance
Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society
Santa Barbara Audubon Society
Save Animals Facing Extinction
Save Our Allegheny Ridges
Save Our Sky Blue Waters
Save the Biosphere
Save The Colorado
SAVE THE FROGS!
Save Wolves Now Network
Sea Turtle Conservancy
Sequoia ForestKeeper®
Sierra Club
Skagit Audubon Society
Social Justice Commission
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Spokane Riverkeeper
Surfrider Foundation
Sustainable Arizona
Swan View Coalition
Tennessee Native Plant Society
Tennessee Naturalist Program
Tennessee Ornithological Society
Trap Free Montana Public Lands
The 'Green Peace Corps'.org
The Cloud Foundation
The Cougar Fund
The Enchanted Biscuit
The Field Museum
The Lands Council
The Rewilding Institute
The Safina Center
The Urban Wildlands Group
Toxic Free NC

Tracy Aviary
Trap Free Montana
Tucson Audubon Society
Umpqua Valley Audubon Society
Umpqua Watersheds, Inc.
Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition
Urban Bird Foundation
Urban Growers Collective
Utah Native Plant Society
Ventana Wilderness Alliance
Vermont Center for Ecostudies
Vermont Natural Resources Council
Virginia Society of Ornithology
Washington Crossing Audubon Society
Washington Wild
Waterkeeper Alliance
West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Jobs
Western Environmental Law Center
Western Nebraska Resources Council
Western Watersheds Project
Whidbey Environmental Action Network
WILD HORSE EDUCATION
Wild Nature Institute
Wildcare Eastern Sierra
WildEarth Guardians
WilderUtopia
Wilderness Workshop
Wildlife Alliance of Maine
Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation, Inc.
WildWest Institute
Wolf Conservation Center
Wolf Veterinary Services
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation
Xun Biosphere Project