

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 5, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

A record number of anti-environmental provisions undermining the Endangered Species Act have been included in the Senate and House versions of the FY 2016 Interior appropriations bill. As you work with Congress to negotiate a spending package, we urge you to flatly reject all riders that would undermine Endangered Species Act protections for particular species or otherwise erode the Act.

In 1973, as an increasing number of plant and animal species were disappearing, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act with overwhelming bipartisan support. More than 40 years later, our world's wildlife is again at a critical point. The extinction of earth's species is now at its highest rate since the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago, with human activity – including significant ecological impacts from climate change – initiating an extinction crisis on our planet. Now more than ever we need a strong, fully funded, and enforced Endangered Species Act. This law has prevented 99 percent of the species under its care from going extinct.

Unfortunately, just as we face enormous threats to our planet's biodiversity, some in Congress are seeking to undermine the Endangered Species Act. More than 80 legislative proposals have already been introduced in this Congress to undermine key pieces of this vital law and to block protections for particular species. All such legislative attacks – including the record number of FY 2016 Interior appropriations riders – undermine the Endangered Species Act, which calls for science-based decision-making to protect all wildlife, plants, and fish that are in danger of extinction.

We strongly urge that you oppose all appropriations riders that would undermine Endangered Species Act protections, including the rider that is included in both the Senate and House versions of the FY 2016 Interior appropriations bill that would remove federal protections for gray wolves.

We appreciate the strong Statement of Administration Policy (SAP) you issued on June 23, opposing sections of the House Department of the Interior Appropriations Bill, H.R. 2822, that would result in “limiting the ability of the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service] to properly protect, based on the best available science, a number of species, including the greater sage grouse, northern long-eared bat, and certain gray wolf populations.” We agree with you that decisions about protecting species under the Endangered Species Act should be made based upon science – such provisions have no place in the appropriations process.

A national poll conducted in June 2015 found that ninety percent of American voters support the Endangered Species Act. In standing up for this critical law, you will have our strong support as well as that of an overwhelming majority of the public.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



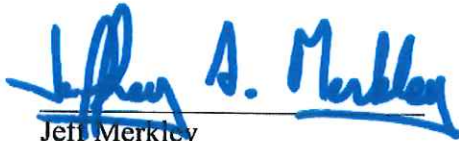
Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



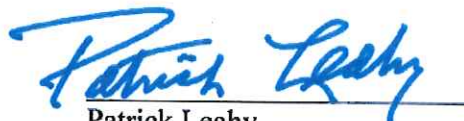
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



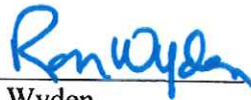
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



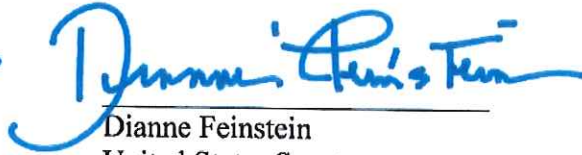
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
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Chris Coons
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Thomas Carper
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Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Bernie Sanders
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Mazie Hirono
United States Senator

Cc: Brian Deese, Senior Advisor to President Obama, The White House
Secretary Sally Jewell, U.S. Department of the Interior
Director Dan Ashe, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Christy Goldfuss, Managing Director, The White House Council on Environmental Quality