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

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

Ben Cardin
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Tom Udall
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
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  
United States Senator

Chris Coons  
United States Senator

Tom Carper  
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

Jack Reed  
United States Senator

Bernie Sanders  
United States Senator

Charles Schumer  
United States Senator

Patty Murray  
United States Senator

Mazie K. 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