

April 13, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Capitol S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Capitol H-307
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Capitol S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger:

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we respectfully request that you increase funding for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to conserve and recover threatened and endangered species on our nation's public lands. The extinction and climate crises require an all-hands-on-deck approach, and our federal lands management agencies have a key role in reversing the trend toward mass species extinctions and helping species adapt to a rapidly changing climate. The BLM and USFS manage approximately 20% of the country's land base, providing habitat for hundreds of species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and thousands of sensitive species. These agencies have long been deprived of the funding they need to adequately conserve and restore imperiled species. Given the enormity, urgency, and complexity of the extinction crisis and the importance of BLM and USFS lands in contributing to solutions, we respectfully ask for FY22 funding levels for programs that specifically address the extinction crisis and restore resilient ecosystems.

Bureau of Land Management Funding Needs

Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species Program request: **\$33,850,250**. Current T&E Species Program funding levels support recovery actions for a fraction of the 337 listed species that occur on BLM-administered lands. We recommend an increase in appropriations to \$33.85 million, an uptick of \$12.28 million over the FY21 enacted level, to support more recovery actions for more species. Additionally, given the impact of the recent reorganization, we recommend that you direct BLM to report on species recovery needs and T&E program capacity. We also recommend reinstating the T&E Program as its own subactivity to improve outcome tracking and accountability.

Plant Conservation and Restoration Program request: **\$25,000,000**. This BLM program is integral to restoring native ecosystems and the services they provide. The Program leads the interagency Native Plant Materials Development, Seeds of Success, and Sagebrush in Prisons initiatives and the National Seed Strategy—a public-private enterprise to achieve the goal of providing the “right seeds in the right place at the right time.” We recommend a funding level of \$25 million for this program, which represents \$11.15 million more than BLM's internal FY21 allocation, for continuing the National Seed Strategy and increasing botanical expertise necessary to yield successful wildlife habitat restoration and

long-term ecosystem resiliency. This essential program deserves its own subactivity to improve accountability and ensure durability.

Resource Management Planning (RMP) request: **\$71,125,000**. Resource management planning grounds habitat and imperiled species conservation. In the past four years, the BLM prioritized completing RMP revisions to open lands for industrial exploitation at the expense of conservation, sacred places, and wildlife. The BLM must revise the most egregious of these revisions to restore critical protections to imperiled species and habitat. Further, to align with President Biden's *Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*, the BLM must initiate programmatic initiatives and associated RMP amendments to institute regional and range-wide imperiled species and ecosystem strategies and address climate change. New policy direction for and expertise in carbon accounting, ecosystem restoration, environmental science, and traditional ecological knowledge will be needed to guide RMP revisions.

U.S. Forest Service Funding Needs¹

Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management request: **\$29,000,000** and a new budget line item for the Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive (TES) Species Program funded at **\$8,000,000**. For USFS to restore habitat for species such as elk and trout and contribute to the recovery of ESA listed species including the black-footed ferret and northern spotted owl, this budget must be rebuilt. Restoring funding to historic levels requires an increase to \$29 million from \$20.7 million enacted for FY21. Creating a line item for the TES Species Program will assure accountability and enable the Forest Service to reduce the number of listed species and prevent other species from needing federal protection.

Land Management Planning, Assessment and Monitoring request: **\$24,500,000**. About one third of management plans are over 20 years old and cannot provide adequate guidance. The 2012 planning rule was meant to speed planning, engage communities, provide land designation opportunities, and promote ESA listed species recovery. The rule is a natural vehicle for advancing 30x30 conservation goals and the *Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*. An appropriation of \$24.5 million would restore the planning budget to levels equivalent to the peak over the last two decades.

Research and Development (R&D) Programs request: **\$84,000,000**. The COVID-19 pandemic taught us that we are not going to solve complex, global-scale problems without cutting edge science—biological, physical, and social. We recommend \$84 million for R&D Programs, including a specific budget allocation for the Wildlife and Fish Research Program, which has historically received 9-10% of the R&D Program line item but warrants a significant increase given the magnitude of the biodiversity crisis.

USFS and BLM are entrusted by the American people to safeguard wildlife and other species that—absent intervention—are on the path to extinction. We thank you for considering our requests for the FY22 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

¹ The USFS budget is undergoing modernization, and comparing BLM and USFS funding levels across similar programs may not be useful. Additionally, sufficient appropriations accompanying USFS line items for salaries and expenses to support staff are essential for successfully maintaining agency programs.

Defenders of Wildlife
350 Montana
Alaska Rainforest Defenders
Alaska Wilderness League
Animal Legal Defense Fund
Animal Welfare Institute
Appalachian Mountain Club
Arizona Trail Association
Bat Conservation International
California Wilderness Coalition
Californians for Western Wilderness
Cascadia Wildlands
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Plant Conservation
Christian Council of Delmarva
Clean Water Action
Coastal Plains Institute
Conservation Council For Hawaii
Conservation Law Foundation
Conservation Northwest
Conserve Southwest Utah
EARTHDAY.ORG
Earthjustice
EcoFlight
Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Species Coalition
Environment America
Environment Arizona
Environment California
Environment Colorado
Environment Connecticut
Environment Florida
Environment Georgia
Environment Illinois
Environment Iowa
Environment Maine
Environment Maryland
Environment Massachusetts
Environment Michigan
Environment Minnesota
Environment Missouri
Environment Montana
Environment Nevada
Environment New Hampshire
Environment New Jersey
Environment New Mexico
Environment New York
Environment North Carolina

Environment Ohio
Environment Oregon
Environment Rhode Island
Environment Texas
Environment Virginia
Environment Washington
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Protection Information Center
Friends of Plumas Wilderness
Friends of the Earth U.S.
Friends of the Inyo
Friends of the Sonoran Desert
Global Indigenous Council
Grand Junction Area Chapter - Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Great Lakes Wildlife Alliance
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Great Old Broads for Wilderness - NorCal Broads
Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Northern San Juan Chapter
Greater Hells Canyon Council
Heartwood
High Country Conservation Advocates
Humane Society Legislative Fund
Institute for Applied Ecology
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
John Muir Project of Earth Island Institute
Klamath Forest Alliance
Lassen Forest Preservation Group
League of Conservation Voters
Los Padres ForestWatch
Maine Audubon
Maine Conservation Voters
Maine Rivers
Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network
Mojave Desert Land Trust
Montana Wilderness Association
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Council of Maine
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nevada County Climate Action Now
New Mexico Wild
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides
Oceanic Preservation Society
Oregon Natural Desert Association
Park County Environmental Council
Patagonia
Pelican island Audubon Society
PennEnvironment

Project Eleven Hundred
Public Interest Coalition
Rachel Carson Council
Raptors Are The Solution
RESTORE: The North Woods
Rio Grande Valley Broadband of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Rocky Mountain Recreation and Wildlife Initiative
Rocky Mountain Wild
San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance
San Juan Citizens Alliance
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
Save Animals Facing Extinction
Save the Manatee Club
Save The Yellowstone Grizzly
Sequoia Riverlands Trust
Sierra Club
Sierra CPR-Conserving, Protecting and Restoring the Sierra Nevada
Sierra Forest Legacy
Sierra Nevada Alliance
South San Juan Broadband, Great Old Broads for Wilderness
South Yuba River Citizens League
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
Southern Environmental Law Center
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Southwest Environmental Center
Sugar Pine Foundation
Sustainable Tahoe
The Enviro Show
The Fire Restoration Group
The Forest Advocate
The Humane Society of the United States
The Rewilding Institute
The Wilderness Society
Trap Free Montana Public Lands
Tuolumne River Trust
Turner Endangered Species Fund
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Upper Gila Watershed Alliance
Vet Voice Foundation
Waterkeeper Alliance
Western Environmental Law Center
Western Nebraska Resources Council
Western Watersheds Project
White Mountain Conservation League
WildEarth Guardians
WildLands Defense
Wildlands Network
Wisconsin Environment

Wolf Conservation Center
Yaak Valley Forest Council