

July 28, 2021

The Honorable Tom Carper
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
1511 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairmen,

As you work to craft the Environment and Public Works and Natural Resources titles of the American Jobs Plan, we urge you to ensure that the package includes funding to conserve species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

A key pillar of the American Jobs Plan is to protect and restore nature-based infrastructure, something that cannot be accomplished without addressing the biodiversity crisis. Numerous scientific studies in the last several years have raised the alarm about this crisis. A landmark 2019 study¹ compiled by hundreds of the world's leading scientists found that about 1 million species are facing extinction. A subsequent report² by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity warned that humanity is at a crossroads and the biodiversity crisis is intensifying.

The resilience and health of wildlife and ecosystems are directly related to human health and well-being. As one example, half a trillion dollars of crops per year are at risk from pollinator loss. Ecosystem services, from fisheries to water filtration and beyond, are all at grave risk because of the damage to natural systems. Moreover, the World Economic Forum found that the biodiversity crisis is one of the top three threats to the global economy in its 2020 report.³

The biodiversity crisis cannot be addressed without funding, especially funds for endangered and threatened species, those most at risk of extinction. More than 1,900 scientists signed a letter⁴ published in the journal *Science* which asked Congress to fully fund conservation programs to protect biodiversity including the ESA, our nation's most effective tool in preventing extinction. But years of severely inadequate funding and the scale of the catastrophe facing the planet's wildlife mean significantly more funding is needed in every area. Hundreds of listed species receive less than \$1,000 per year for recovery and many receive no federal funding at all. Studies have found that over \$1.5 billion per year is needed to recover the more than 1,600 U.S. species listed under the ESA.⁵ Furthermore, Section 7 of the ESA requires each federal agency and

¹ Diaz, S., J. Settele, E. S. Brondizio, et al. 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."

² Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. 2020. "Global Biodiversity Outlook 5." Montreal.

³ World Economic Forum Global Risks Report 2020

⁴ Malcom, J et al. 2019. "Solve the biodiversity crisis with funding." *Science* 365 (6459): 1256

⁵ <https://defenders-cci.org/publication/esa-recovery-costs/>

department to use their authorities to recover listed species, which can mean carrying out, authorizing, or funding projects – from habitat restoration for large roads to managing small culverts in national forests – in ways that advance recovery and resilience of listed species, another need for funding that has never been adequately addressed.

The American Jobs Plan will not be successful in its goal of protecting and restoring nature-based infrastructure unless it provides funding to address the most vulnerable species – those at risk of extinction. Again, we urge the inclusion of funding to conserve species listed under the ESA as the legislation advances through the House and Senate. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Bird Conservancy
Animal Legal Defense Fund
Animal Welfare Institute
Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Born Free USA
California Native Plant Society
Cascadia Wildlands
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Large Landscape Conservation
Christian Council of Delmarva
Clean Water Action
Coastal Plains Institute
Conservation Council For Hawaii
Conservation Law Foundation
Defenders of Wildlife
Earthjustice
Endangered Habitats League
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Center of San Diego
Environmental Protection Information Center
FOUR PAWS US
Friends of the Earth
Great Lakes Wildlife Alliance
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Heartwood
Howling For Wolves
Humane Society Legislative Fund
International Fund for Animal Welfare
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
Klamath Forest Alliance

League of Conservation Voters
National Parks Conservation Association
Native Plant Society of the United States
Natural Resources Defense Council
NY4WHALES
Oceanic Preservation Society
Rachel Carson Council
Resource Renewal Institute
RESTORE: The North Woods
Save Animals Facing Extinction
Save the Manatee Club
Sierra Club
Sierra Forest Legacy
Southwest Environmental Center
Trap Free Montana Public Lands
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Waterkeeper Alliance
Western Watersheds Project
WildEarth Guardians
Wolf Conservation Center
World Wildlife Fund