

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 26, 2010

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Ranking Member Alexander:

We write to support necessary funding for the US Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) endangered species operating accounts and the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund in the FY 2011 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

When Congress passed the Endangered Species Act in 1973, it recognized that America has an obligation to protect its most vulnerable species of wildlife, fish and plants and to ensure a rich conservation legacy for our children and grandchildren. Congress also understood that protecting these natural habitats yields direct benefits to our families and communities, including: water, soil and air purification; new medical discoveries; improved crop pollination; sources of raw materials; and coastal storm protection and flood control.

However, there is currently a backlog of 249 domestic and 20 foreign candidate species under the Act. In addition, the development and implementation of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs), intended to allow non-federal activities to proceed continues to grow, with funding needed to help ensure timely and effective development and monitoring of 739 existing and nearly 40 HCPs under development. Finally, given our nation's effort to greatly expand development of renewable energy, sufficient resources will be needed in the Consultation program to ensure that projects move forward expeditiously, while still protecting listed species.

We appreciate the Subcommittee's support over the past several years and ask that it continue to devote sufficient efforts – under considerable budget constraints – to adequately fund the many important activities under the ESA. We are also particularly interested in adequate funding for the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund, as well as a new program that allows landowners to deduct the cost of measures taken to implement species recovery plans on their property.

Thank you for your kind consideration of these requests. We look forward to working with you as the FY 2011 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill moves forward in the Senate.

Sincerely,



B. J. Sanders

Jeffrey A. Merkle

Olympe Snow

Barbara

Ben Card

Ann Fisk

John Min
Chris Dodd

Carl Levin

Samuel X. Spaka

Rebecca Stenow