May 1, 2024

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Matt Cartwright  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairs Rogers and Simpson and Ranking Members Cartwright and Pingree:

As you begin the process of crafting the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 appropriation bills, we desperately need increased funding at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for endangered species conservation, including Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing, planning and consultation, species conservation and restoration, and species recovery. Specifically, we request $486.19 million across FWS and NMFS for FY25 to recover and conserve our Nation’s most imperiled species.

The world is in the midst of a staggering and unprecedented biodiversity crisis. Once common wildlife and plant populations are crashing around the world, and scientists warn that one million animal and plant species are heading towards extinction, many in the next few decades, due to habitat loss, climate change, wildlife exploitation, and other human activities. Insects and other important pollinators are rapidly declining. Butterfly species across the American West are in a fast decline as the region becomes hotter and drier. In North America alone, scientists estimate that bird populations have declined by more than 25% percent in the since 1970, and globally nearly one-third of freshwater fish are threatened with extinction.

Importantly, 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 more are all at grave risk from the damage to natural systems. Moreover, the World Economic Forum Global Risk report for 2024 identifies biodiversity loss as the third most severe risk to the global economy over the next ten years.\(^1\) This loss is also at the root of devastating zoonotic diseases, which result from the spillover of zoonotic pathogens from wildlife to humans, including SARS, Ebola, and HIV. Such spillover events are increasing in frequency, driven by deforestation and land degradation, and wildlife trade.

Fortunately, the U.S. Endangered Species Act is one of the strongest tools we have to combat the current wildlife extinction crisis. In enacting the Endangered Species Act of 1973, Congress recognized that imperiled species of wildlife, fish and plants “are of esthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific value to the Nation and its people.” Congress gave the FWS and NMFS a powerful set of tools to carry out the law’s goal of conserving endangered species.

Thousands of animal and plant species depend on the Endangered Species Act for survival, yet it has been systematically and severely underfunded for decades. The need for increased funding is evident from the over 400 threatened and endangered species that lack recovery plans, as well as the hundreds of species that receive zero dollars in recovery funding from any agency – federal or state. Congressional appropriations for recovery and consultation have simply not kept pace with the number of listed species or the complex challenges of conservation in a world facing the accelerating threats of climate change and habitat loss. Inadequate funding not only puts at risk the recovery of threatened and endangered species and conservation of their habitats; it also impedes FWS and NMFS’s ability to apply the best scientific knowledge available in a timely review of listing decisions for species in need of protection.

Unfortunately, animals and plants continue to go extinct in the United States while waiting for the Act’s protections. Implementing recovery strategies and partner activities in an effective manner requires both a significant commitment and sufficient resources. Strong funding for Ecological Services supports FWS’s work with partners at the state and local level both to recover listed species and protect their habitats. Similarly, funding for NMFS Protected Resources Science and Management program is crucial for the protection and recovery of imperiled marine species.

For FY25, we request the following funding:

- $412.71 million for FWS ecological services
- $73.48 million for FWS Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund
- $361.3 million for NMFS ESA Programs

This funding is critical to save more species from extinction and put America’s imperiled animals and plants on the path to recovery. We look forward to working with the Subcommittees to ensure that these programs are adequately funded in FY25.

Sincerely,

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources
Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress

André Carson  
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

Seth Magsiner  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

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