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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES.

Expressing the need for protecting and conserving at least 50 percent of the lands and oceans in the United States and encouraging diplomatic efforts to achieve this goal worldwide.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BEYER submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Expressing the need for protecting and conserving at least 50 percent of the lands and oceans in the United States and encouraging diplomatic efforts to achieve this goal worldwide.

Whereas the Earth is facing a biodiversity and extinction crisis;

Whereas there has been an average 68-percent decrease in population sizes of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and fish between 1970 and 2016;

Whereas the global rate of species extinction is at least tens to hundreds of times higher than the average rate over the past 10,000,000 years and is accelerating;

Whereas humans are causing an unprecedented decline in natural ecosystems and global biodiversity, and at current rates could cause the extinction of more than 1,000,000 species;

Whereas climate change and the destruction of natural environments present existential crises for humans and millions of other species around the world;

Whereas all life depends on essential ecosystems, including for food, clean air and water, protection from extreme weather events, and as a source for new medicines;

Whereas damaging or erasing ecosystems can therefore have a profound impact on wildlife and human health and well-being;

Whereas inequitable policies have led to a targeted denuding of biodiversity in communities of color and low-income communities, creating great harm and preventing these communities from having equal access to the benefits of biodiversity;

Whereas land degradation is one of the largest contributors to climate change and is responsible for the loss of trillions of dollars' worth of ecosystem benefits each year;

Whereas scientific studies indicate that if current trends in habitat conversion and anthropogenic emissions do not peak by 2030, global temperatures will rise more than 1.5° Celsius, resulting in severe impacts to ecosystems globally;

Whereas the late E.O. Wilson has estimated that protecting half of the Earth's land and seas would be sufficient to preserve 85 percent of the planet's species, and with it, global biodiversity;

Whereas conserving and restoring natural ecosystems provides greater net economic benefits than destroying natural spaces and wildlife for profit;

Whereas jobs that do not harm biodiversity, such as the outdoor recreation industry that alone accounted for 1.8 percent (\$374,000,000,000) of current-dollar gross domestic product and created 4,300,000 direct jobs in 2020, enable individuals to have meaningful careers outside of toxic industries that harm their health;

Whereas public-private partnerships play a notable role in achieving conservation efforts within the United States and around the world;

Whereas studies have shown that communities often experience economic and employment growth and health improvements when local natural areas are protected;

Whereas establishing protected natural areas can reduce local rates of infectious diseases, provide cleaner drinking water, improve diets, reduce air pollution, and generally provide for a healthier population;

Whereas access to nature ensures cultural and spiritual enrichment, as well as physical and mental health benefits;

Whereas biodiversity conservation is essential to ensure that pollinators and other beneficial species for food production, globally valued at up to more than \$500,000,000,000, will continue to thrive;

Whereas natural areas such as forests, wetlands, grasslands, and mangroves can sequester large amounts of carbon, and protecting these areas prevents sequestered carbon from being released into the atmosphere;

Whereas the disappearance and destruction of natural habitat is the primary cause of biological diversity loss at every

level and is a cause of zoonotic spillover that can contribute to pandemics;

Whereas only by the preservation of substantial, more natural, intact habitat than previously envisioned can human-driven extinctions be eliminated; and

Whereas the America the Beautiful Initiative and its goal of conserving 30 percent of lands and oceans in the United States by 2030 is a crucial first step to protecting biodiversity and mitigating the effects of climate change: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives that—

3 (1) the Earth is facing an imminent crisis from
4 the extinction of species and the decline of biodiver-
5 sity; and

6 (2) Congress should work to support protecting
7 and conserving at least 50 percent of the lands and
8 oceans in the United States and encourage diplo-
9 matic efforts to achieve this goal worldwide.