

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 16, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

We, the undersigned members of Congress, write today to express our deep concern about your misguided idea to form a new “International Wildlife Conservation Council” to promote trophy killing and urge you to abandon it. The stated goal of this council is to boost public awareness of the "benefits that result from U.S. citizens traveling to foreign nations to engage in hunting;" however, trophy hunting is unethical, unpopular, and of questionable conservation value in many cases. Further, this council is a poor use of taxpayer dollars. The few wealthy hobbyists who can afford to fly around the world for the sole purpose of killing endangered animals do not need to be subsidized by the many Americans who love these iconic and imperiled species but can only dream of seeing them anywhere other than at the zoo or on the Discovery Channel.

This council is not actually intended to promote conservation. Instead, it is intended to rationalize the behavior and advance the agenda of a miniscule subset of the uber-rich who find entertainment in killing rare wildlife. The suggestion that this council would help us confront poaching and wildlife trafficking is laughable: the Administration has already abandoned other, more legitimate and effective efforts to address these issue. For instance, the Trump administration has not held a meeting of the Wildlife Trafficking Advisory Council or the Federal Interagency Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking created by President Obama.

It is not only shortsighted but also disingenuous to elevate trophy hunting above other tools that have proven more valuable and effective for wildlife conservation and economic development. An analysis by Economists at Large found that, overall, trophy hunting accounts for less than 2 percent of tourism revenues in Africa.¹ Photo safaris, in comparison, allow for sustainable, lucrative tourism activity in which the animals can be “rescued” rather than killed.

Furthermore, the Federal Advisory Committee Act requires that “new advisory committees should be established only when they are determined to be essential and their number should be kept to the minimum necessary.” This council is not essential, and its function is already covered

¹ Economists at Large, 2013. *The \$200 million question: How much does trophy hunting really contribute to African communities?*, a report for the African Lion Coalition, prepared by Economists at Large, Melbourne, Australia.
<<https://www.ifaw.org/sites/default/files/Ecolarge-2013-200m-question.pdf>>

by the very broad mandate of the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council. The proposed makeup of this new council also concerns us, with designated seats for representatives of the firearms and ammunition industries, who have no scientific or conservation expertise.

Most Americans want to see international wildlife valued and protected via nonlethal methods. In fact, 86% of Americans oppose hunting big game (HBO Real Sports/Marist Poll), clearly indicating that this proposed council is not in the public interest.² As members of Congress, we have a responsibility to ensure that the wishes of the majority of wildlife-loving Americans are upheld and that our government promotes the best global conservation policies. We urge the USFWS to dismantle its plans for the International Wildlife Conservation Council.

Sincerely,



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

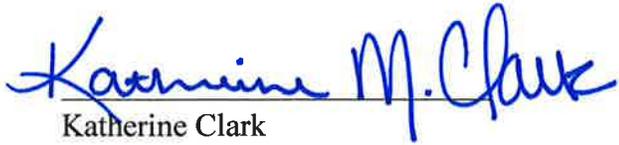


Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

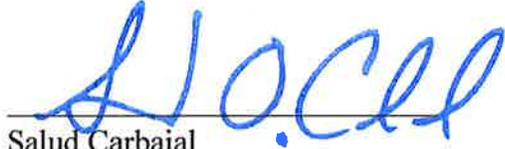
² HBO Real Sports/Marist Poll, 2015. *Americans Oppose Big Game Hunting... More Than Six in Ten Favor Legal Ban*. Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. <http://maristpoll.marist.edu/wp-content/misc/usapolls/us151001/Sports/HBO%20Real%20Sports_Marist%20Poll_Complete%20Survey%20Findings_November%202015.pdf>



Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



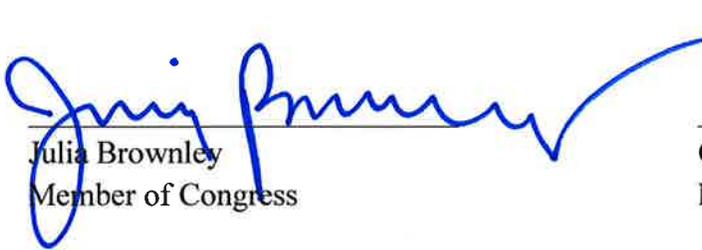
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



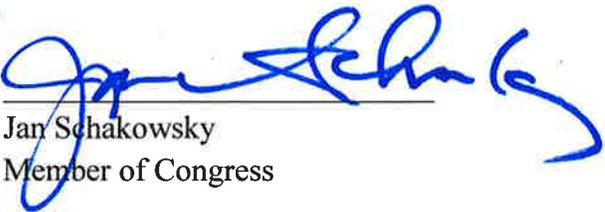
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



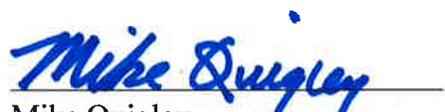
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



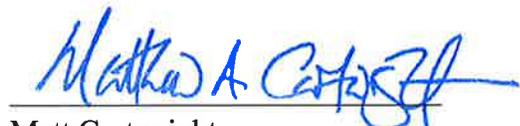
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



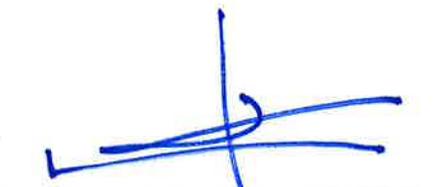
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



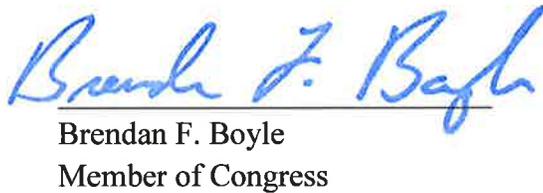
Ted Deutch
Member of Congress


Elizabeth H. Esty
Member of Congress


Albio Sires
Member of Congress


Mark Takano
Member of Congress

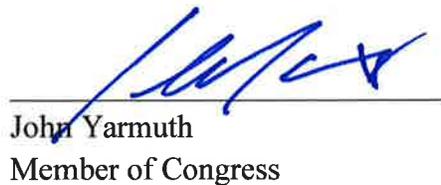

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

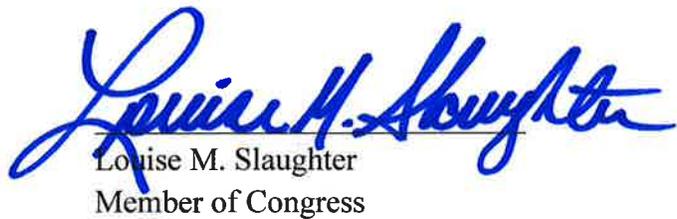

Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress


Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress


Jackie Speier
Member of Congress


Jim Langevin
Member of Congress


John Yarmuth
Member of Congress


Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress


Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress