

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 12, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Capitol, S-128  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Capitol, S-128  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Vice Chair Collins,

Thank you for your ongoing work on Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) appropriations bills. As the Senate and House begin the process of conferencing FY24 appropriations for the Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, we respectfully request that you reject any and all riders that would undermine the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including but not limited to any targeted provisions to block protections for particular species or prevent federal agencies from taking action to finalize, implement, or enforce proposed ESA rules.

In 1973, when an increasing number of plant and animal species were on the decline, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act with overwhelming bipartisan support. This law has been wildly successful, saving 99 percent of the wildlife under its protection from extinction.

Now, 50 years later, our world's wildlife is again at a critical juncture. As a result of human impacts on our environment, we are facing a global extinction crisis on par with the events that drove dinosaurs to extinction 65 million years ago. Species today are going extinct at a rate thousands of times faster than natural extinction rates. Scientists estimate that more than one in six species are threatened with extinction this century. We need the Endangered Species Act now more than ever. But in the year that marks the 50th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, this Congress has been one of the worst for the ESA, with over 50 legislative proposals to undermine the Act.

We specifically ask that you block all riders that undermine the ESA, including provisions in the House FY24 Interior Appropriations bill that would block federal protections for particular species such as the gray wolf, sage-grouse, lesser prairie-chicken, grizzly bears, northern long-eared bat and Texas kangaroo rat. The House Interior Appropriations bill also includes harmful cuts to already-underfunded wildlife and public lands programs, and we encourage you to secure the funding laid out in the Senate bill.

Decisions about protecting species under the Endangered Species Act should be made by scientists, not politicians. The practice of cherry-picking certain species from the list of threatened and endangered species—literally making life and death decisions—has no place in the appropriations process.


Recent national polls indicate that 84 percent of American voters support the Endangered Species Act. As you stand up for this critical law in the House and Senate bill conference process, in the year of its 50th anniversary, you will be backed by our strong support, as well as the support of an overwhelming majority of the public.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



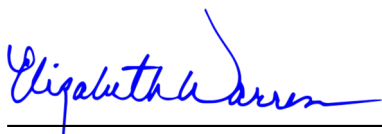
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



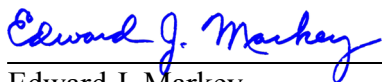
Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



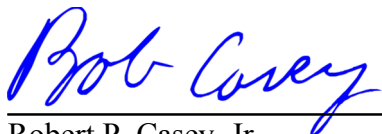
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



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Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



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Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



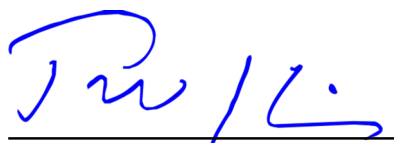
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Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



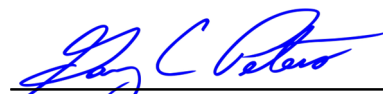
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Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



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Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



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Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



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Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



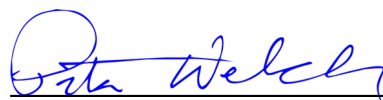
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Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



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Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



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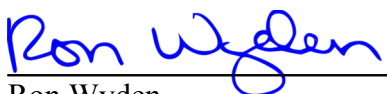
Peter Welch  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Laphonza Butler  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



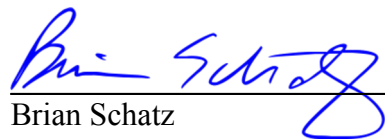
Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



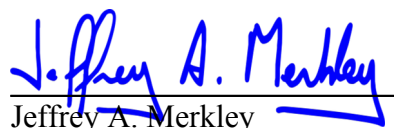
John Fetterman  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Brian Schatz  
United States Senator

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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Michael F. Bennet in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator