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**Watersheds Project \* Western Wildlife Conservancy \* Whale and Dolphin Conservation \* Whibdey Environmental Action Network \* White Mountain Conservation League \* Wild Utah Project \* WildEarth Guardians \* Wilderness Watch \* Wilderness Workshop \* Wildlands Network \* Wildlife Alliance of Maine \* Wildlife Center of Virginia \* Wolf Conservation Center \* Wolf Haven International \* Wolves of Douglas County Wisconsin \* Wolves of the Rockies \* World Wildlife Fund \* Wyoming Untrapped \* Wyoming Wildlife Advocates \* Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation \* Yellowstone to Uintas Connection \* Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative**

November 17, 2015

The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters throughout the United States, the undersigned organizations write to urge you to reject all riders on final spending legislation for Fiscal Year 2016 that would undermine the Endangered Species Act and put individual species at risk of extinction. While there are numerous anti-environmental riders we oppose due to their effects on air quality, water quality and human health, this letter focuses on those riders that would weaken the Endangered Species Act.

The Endangered Species Act remains the most important law our nation has ever passed to protect species at risk of extinction. It has been tremendously effective at safeguarding species and placing them on the path to recovery. In its 42 years, the Endangered Species Act has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species placed under its protection. The Endangered Species Act is also one of the most popular conservation laws. According to a June 2015 poll, 90 percent of American voters support the Endangered Species Act.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of this bedrock environmental law's tremendous success and its popularity with the American public, some members of Congress are determined to weaken the Act primarily for the benefit of polluting industries that contribute to climate change and harm our planet. One U.S. Representative even announced recently that he would like to see the Endangered Species Act repealed.<sup>2</sup> More than 85 legislative proposals have already been introduced in this Congress to weaken this vital law. Each of these measures, including the record number of riders currently on the Interior appropriations bills, undermines the Endangered Species Act.

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<sup>1</sup> National poll conducted by Tulchin Research, July 2015, *available at* <http://earthjustice.org/sites/default/files/files/PollingMemoNationalESASurvey.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Television interview with Congressman Valadao (R-CA), June 2015, *available at* <http://www.bakersfieldnow.com/news/drought/Congressman-Valadao-joins-Eyewitness-News-to-talk-drought-309607701.html>

The House of Representatives voted to include numerous riders that weaken the overall implementation of the Endangered Species Act on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2016. These riders remove necessary protections for species at risk of extinction, prevent future protection for imperiled species, limit citizens' ability to enforce the government's legal obligations under the Act, and automatically remove protections for species if the appropriate federal wildlife agency fails to complete its 5-year review on time. These proposals run counter to the Endangered Species Act's science-based process to protect all wildlife, plants, and fish in danger of extinction. The Senate Interior appropriations bill contains three of the same riders that attack protections for gray wolves, sage grouse, and the lesser prairie chicken. Enactment of any of these riders would be damaging to the species involved and contribute to the unraveling of the Endangered Species Act and the decades' worth of protections that have saved species like the bald eagle, gray whale, and American alligator from extinction.

The conservation challenges America faces today are far greater and more complex than they were when the Endangered Species Act was enacted over four decades ago. We face the reality of climate change and other enormous threats to our planet's biodiversity—which in turn threaten our own survival as a species. Scientists predict that as many as 30 to 50 percent of all species could be heading toward extinction by mid-century.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, now is not the time to weaken the best tool our nation has to combat the planet's sixth great wave of extinction.

As your Administration works with Congress to negotiate the Fiscal Year 2016 omnibus appropriations bill, we urge you to flatly reject all riders that undermine the Endangered Species Act in any way, including weakening or preventing protection for specific species. These harmful measures have no place in the appropriations context and only serve to chip away at one of America's most popular and effective environmental laws. We look forward to working with your Administration to uphold the Endangered Species Act, continuing the legacy of conservation for which this great country is known.

Respectfully,

ACL Inc  
Alaska Wilderness League  
Alliance for the Wild Rockies  
American Bird Conservancy  
American Forests  
American Rivers  
Americas for Conservation + the Arts  
Animal Protection Voters  
Animal Welfare Institute  
Azul  
BARK  
Berkshire Environmental Action Team

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<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* and Thomas, C. D., A. Cameron, R. E. Green, M. Bakkenes, L. J. Beaumont, Y. C. Collingham, B. F. N. Erasmus, M. Ferreira de Siqueira, A. Grainger, Lee Hannah, L. Hughes, Brian Huntley, A. S. van Jaarsveld, G. F. Midgley, L. Miles, M. A. Ortega-Huerta, A. Townsend Peterson, O. L. Phillips, and S. E. Williams. 2004. Extinction risk from climate change. *Nature* 427: 145–148.

Born Free USA  
Buffalo Field Campaign  
Butte Environmental Council  
California Native Plant Society  
California Wolf Center  
Californians for Western Wilderness  
Cascadia Wildlands  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Food Safety  
Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists  
Citizen Action New Mexico  
Clean Water Action  
CNPS, Yerba Buena Chapter  
Colorado Native Plant Society  
Conservation Congress  
Conservation Council for Hawai'i  
Conservation Northwest  
Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship  
Cornell Lab of Ornithology  
Craighead Institute  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Earthjustice  
Earthworks  
Eastern Coyote/Coywolf Research  
Endangered Habitats League  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Endangered Wolf Center  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Environmental Protection Information Center  
Federated Conservationists of Westchester County  
Florida Native Plant Society  
Friends of Bell Smith Springs  
Friends of the Bitterroot  
Friends of Whitehaven Park  
Friends of the Wild Swan  
Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf and Wildlife  
Gallatin Wildlife Association  
Golden Gate Audubon Soc, SF, CA  
Grand Canyon Trust  
Grand Canyon Wildlands Council  
Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
Greater Yellowstone Coalition  
GreenLatinos  
Greenpeace  
Heartwood  
Hells Canyon Preservation Council  
Hoosier Environmental Council

Howling For Wolves  
Humane Society International  
Humane Society Legislative Fund  
Humane Society of the United States  
Idaho Conservation League  
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute  
Jean-Michel Cousteau's Ocean Futures Society  
Kinikinnick Native Plant Society  
Klamath Forest Alliance  
KS Wild  
La Madre Tierra  
League of Conservation Voters  
League of Humane Voters® - Florida Chapter  
League of Humane Voters® - Georgia Chapter  
League of Humane Voters® - New Jersey Chapter  
League of Humane Voters® - New York Chapter  
League of Humane Voters® - Ohio Chapter  
League of Humane Voters® - Wisconsin Chapter  
Living with Wolves  
Los Padres ForestWatch  
Mission Wolf  
Missouri Wildlife Rescue Center  
Montana Native Plant Society  
National Audubon Society  
National Wolfwatcher Coalition  
Native Plant Conservation Campaign  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Nature Abounds  
NE Oregon Ecosystems  
North Cascades Conservation Council  
North Coast Rivers Alliance  
Northern Jaguar Project  
Oceana  
Oklahoma Native Plant Society  
Orca Behavior Institute  
Orca Network  
Oregon Wild  
Pacific Beach Coalition  
Pacifica Shorebird Alliance  
Predator Defense  
Progressive Congress  
Project Coyote  
Raptors Are the Solution  
Red Wolf Coalition  
RESTORE: The North Woods  
Rocky Mountain Wild  
Round River Conservation Studies  
SandyHook SeaLife Foundation

San Francisco Estuary Partnership  
Save Our Sky Blue Waters  
Save our Wild Salmon  
SAVE THE FROGS!  
Sequoia ForestKeeper  
Sierra Club  
Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute of Northland College  
Sky Island Alliance  
Southern Illinoisans Against Fracturing our Environment  
Southern Resident Killer Whale Chinook Salmon Initiative  
Speak Up For Wildlife Foundation  
The Cougar Fund  
The Enviro Show  
The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs  
The Rewilding Institute  
The Shawnee Forest Sentinels  
The Southwest Environmental Center  
The Urban Wildlands Group  
The Walden Woods Project  
The Wolf Mountain Nature Center  
Turtle Island Restoration Network  
Tucson Audubon Society  
University of California-Davis Arboretum  
Upper Gila Watershed Alliance  
Ventana Wilderness Alliance  
Virginia Native Plant Society  
Voces Verdes  
Western Environmental Law Center  
Western Watersheds Project  
Western Wildlife Conservancy  
Whale and Dolphin Conservation  
Whibdey Environmental Action Network  
White Mountain Conservation League  
WildEarth Guardians  
Wilderness Watch  
Wilderness Workshop  
Wildlands Network  
Wildlife Alliance of Maine  
Wildlife Center of Virginia  
Wolf Conservation Center  
Wolf Haven International  
Wolves of Douglas County Wisconsin  
Wolves of the Rockies  
World Wildlife Fund  
Wyoming Untrapped  
Wyoming Wildlife Advocates  
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation  
Yellowstone to Uintas Connection

Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative

CC: The Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior  
Mr. Brian Deese, Assistant to the President & Senior Advisor from the Office of the Chief of Staff  
Mr. Shaun L.S. Donovan, Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Ms. Christy Goldfuss, Managing Director of the White House Council on Environmental Quality  
Mr. Dan Ashe, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service