

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy:

As the Senate and House begin the process of conferencing FY 2019 Interior appropriations packages, we respectfully request that you reject any and all riders that would undermine the Endangered Species Act, including, but not limited to, any targeted provisions to block protections for particular species.

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, 45 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.

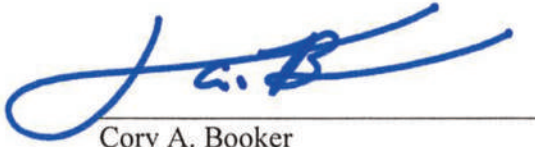
We specifically ask that you block all riders included in the House FY 2019 Interior appropriations bill, including provisions to block federal protections for gray wolves, sage-grouse, lesser prairie-chicken, Preble's Meadow jumping mouse, and salmon.

Decisions about protecting species under the Endangered Species Act should be made based upon science. 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 90 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, 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



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



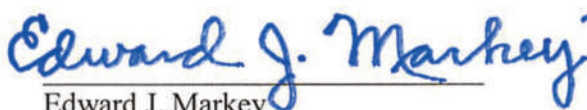
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



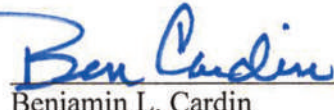
Tom Udall
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Chris Murphy
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



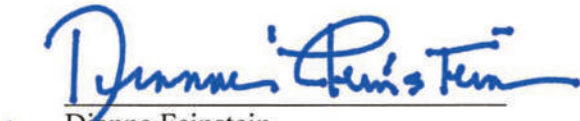
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator


Martin Heinrich
United States Senator


Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator


Ron Wyden
United States Senator


Jack Reed
United States Senator


Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator


Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

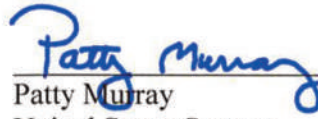

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator


Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



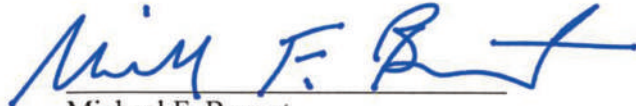
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator