

May 10, 2019

Re: The Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act of 2019

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the millions of members and supporters across the country represented by our 222 organizations, we write to express our strong support for the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act of 2019. We thank you for your leadership on this important legislation that will help protect and restore America's native wildlife and create more resilient landscapes.

The United States is a world leader in efforts to conserve wildlife through a robust network of public lands and waters that includes national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, and other conservation areas, yet wildlife populations continue to decline. Scientists estimate that one in five animal and plant species in the United States are at risk of extinction, largely as a result of habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation. Linking habitat through connective corridors is critical for sustaining biodiversity, ecosystem function, and robust populations into the future. Corridors increase wildlife movement between habitat areas by approximately 50 percent compared to areas not connected by corridors. As species adapt to rapidly changing conditions, including the impacts of climate change, we must take steps to facilitate their ability to travel between existing habitat cores to increase breeding success, genetic diversity, and access to food and shelter. The fourth National Climate Assessment, released earlier this month, stated "habitat fragmentation and loss of connectivity (due to urbanization, roads, dams, etc.) can prevent species from tracking shifts in their required climate." Therefore, it is critical that the United States redouble its efforts to retain, restore, and establish wildlife corridors in order to ease wildlife movements and range shifts.

The Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act establishes a National Wildlife Corridors Program that would provide for the designation of National Wildlife Corridors on federal public lands as well as funding for states, tribes, and other entities to enhance habitat connectivity on non-federal lands through wildlife crossings and other habitat connectivity projects. This will ensure that fish, wildlife, and plants can move between habitats for migration, dispersal, genetic exchange, and climate adaptation across the country. The bill directs federal land and water management agencies to collaborate with each other, as well as with states, tribes, local governments, and private landowners, to develop and manage national wildlife corridors consistent with existing laws and according to the habitat connectivity needs of native species. The bill also creates a publicly available National Wildlife Corridors Database to inform corridor protection. Establishing this program is a critical step forward in protecting and restoring fish, wildlife, and plant species populations across our nation's lands and waters.

The Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act will also improve recreational opportunities for constituents who hunt, fish, and observe nature, increasing economic revenue for local economies. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 101.6 million Americans—40 percent of the U.S. population 16 years old and older—participated in wildlife-related activities in 2016, such as hunting, fishing, and wildlife-watching. These outdoor enthusiasts contributed \$156 billion to the economy.

The Act will also improve human and wildlife road safety by mitigating wildlife collisions. Estimated costs for wildlife vehicle collisions are more than \$8 billion dollars per year in the United States. Wildlife crossings, including bridges, enlarged and retrofitted culverts, and tunnels designed to help wildlife safely cross the road have proven to be the most effective measure to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions.

Increasingly, wildlife corridor protection has bipartisan support around the country. The Western Governors' Association approved a resolution that established a Corridor Protection Initiative, issued an extensive Wildlife Corridors Initiative report, and approved the Protecting Wildlife Migration Corridors and Crucial Wildlife Habitat in the West policy resolution. The Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers passed a resolution recognizing the importance of ecological connectivity for the adaptability and resilience of their region's ecosystems, biodiversity, and human communities in the face of climate change.

Federal agencies and states are also beginning to work together to protect wildlife corridors. The U.S. Forest Service, working with the state of Wyoming, private landowners, sportsmen, and conservation organizations, established the nation's first federally designated wildlife corridor to protect a centuries-old migration route for pronghorn that connects their summer range in Grand Teton National Park with their winter range far to the south in Wyoming's Green River Valley. Today, the Path of the Pronghorn conserves one of the longest remaining terrestrial mammal migration corridors in North America. Additionally, states such as New Hampshire and California have recently passed legislation to protect wildlife corridors.

Many of America's most treasured wildlife, including the Florida panther, bighorn sheep, the monarch butterfly, bull trout, and dozens of salmon runs are threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation. Just as people need roads and highways to travel from one place to another, fish, wildlife, and even plants also need corridors connecting natural communities. The Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act will provide key tools for conserving our nation's wildlife and natural heritage for future generations.

Sincerely,

Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve  
Adirondack Wildlife Refuge  
Adirondacks to Algonquin Collaborative  
Alaska's Big Village Network  
Algonquin to Adirondacks Collaborative  
Alliance for the Great Lakes  
Altamaha Riverkeeper  
American Bird Conservancy  
American Conservation Film Festival  
American Forests  
Animal Welfare Institute  
Animal Wellness Action  
Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
Arc of Appalachia Preserve System  
Arizona Wilderness Coalition  
Atlanta Audubon Society  
Ausable River Association  
Berkshire Environmental Action Team  
Bird City Wisconsin  
Blue Ridge Land Conservancy  
Born Free USA  
Butterfly Farms  
California Chaparral Institute

California Invasive Plant Council  
California Native Plant Society  
California Wilderness Coalition  
Californians for Western Wilderness  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Large Landscape Conservation  
Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition  
Chiricahua-Peloncillo Heritage Days  
Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife  
Clark Fork Coalition  
Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection  
Cold Hollow to Canada  
Colorado Mountain Club  
Community Farm Alliance  
Conejos Clean Water  
Conservation Ecology LLC  
Conservation Northwest  
Conservation Science Partners  
Conserve Southwest Utah  
Continental Divide Trail Coalition  
Cougar Rewilding Foundation  
Craighead Institute  
Cube Iron - Cataract Coalition

Cumberland-Harpeth Audubon Society  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Delaware Center for the Inland Bays  
Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families  
Delaware Nature Society  
Delaware Riverkeeper Network  
Dogwood Alliance  
Downeast Salmon Federation  
E.O Wilson Biodiversity Foundation  
Earth Day Network  
Earthjustice  
ECO-resolutions  
Eddy Foundation  
Endangered Habitats League  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environmental Action Committee of West Marin  
Environmental Protection Information Center  
Florida Wildlife Corridor  
Fly Fishers International  
Foundation Earth  
Friends of Blackwater  
Friends of Dyke Marsh  
Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness  
Friends of Sylvania Wilderness  
Friends of the Inyo  
Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf & Wildlife  
Georgia Wildlife Federation  
Ghost Cat Publications  
Grand Canyon Trust  
Grand Canyon Wildlands Council  
Grassroots Ecology  
Great Lakes Wildlife Alliance  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
Greater Hells Canyon Council  
Greater Yellowstone Coalition  
Green Valley Farm + Mill  
Harris Center for Conservation Education  
Headwaters Montana, Inc.  
Hills For Everyone  
Howard County Bird Club  
Howling For Wolves  
Hudson Highlands Land Trust  
Humane Society Legislative Fund  
Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust  
Idaho Conservation League  
International Bird Rescue

International Fund for Animal Welfare  
Iowa Audubon  
Kaniksu Land Trust  
Kentucky Natural Lands Trust  
Kettle Range Conservation Group  
Klamath Forest Alliance  
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center  
KS Wild  
League of Humane Voters-Wisconsin Chapter  
LIFT Economy  
Long Branch Environmental Education Center  
Los Padres ForestWatch  
Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust  
Maine Audubon  
Marine Resources Council  
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District  
Montana Wilderness Association  
MountainTrue  
National Audubon Society  
National Parks Conservation Association  
National Wolfwatcher Coalition  
Native Plant Conservation Campaign  
NDPonics  
New Hampshire Audubon  
New Mexico Sportsmen  
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance  
New Mexico Wildlife Federation  
New York City Audubon  
Noel J. Cutright Bird Club  
Northcoast Environmental Center  
Northeast Wilderness Trust  
Northern Jaguar Project  
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association  
NY4WHALES  
Old-Growth Forest Network  
Once a Forest  
One Hundred Miles  
Open Space Institute  
Oregon Wild  
Orleans Audubon Society  
Otter Ridge LLC  
OVEC-Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition  
Partners in Forestry Cooperative  
Public Interest Coalition  
Quality Parks  
Quiet Use Coalition

Radnor to River  
Red Wolf Coalition  
Rockbridge Area Conservation Council  
Rocky Mountain Wild  
Rocky Mountain Wildlife and Recreation Initiative  
Round River Conservation Studies  
San Juan Citizens Alliance  
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council  
SandyHook SeaLife Foundation  
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society  
Santa Fe Forest Coalition  
Save Our Sky Blue Waters  
Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition  
Save People Save Wildlife  
SAVE THE FROGS!  
Save the Manatee  
Save the Manatee Club  
Save Wolves Now Network  
Saving Birds Thru Habitat  
Sequoia ForestKeeper  
Sierra Club  
Sierra Club Northern New Mexico Group  
Sky Island Alliance  
South Florida Wildlands Association  
Southeast Regional Land Conservancy  
Southern Conservation Partners, Inc.  
Southern Maryland Audubon Society  
Southwest Environmental Center  
SouthWings  
Strong Roots Organic Farm  
Summit County Safe Passages  
Teton Wildlife Rehabilitation Center  
The Clinch Coalition  
The Humane Society of the United States  
The Institute for Bird Populations  
The Lands Council  
The Maine Wolf Coalition, Inc.  
The Rewilding Institute  
The Vermont Land Trust  
The Vital Ground Foundation  
The Wilderness Society  
True Grass Farms  
Tucson Audubon Society  
Turtle Island Restoration Network  
Two Countries One Forest  
Unexpected Wildlife Refuge  
United Plant Savers  
Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition  
Upstate Forever  
Ventana Wilderness Alliance  
Vermont Center for Ecostudies  
Vermont Natural Resources Council  
Vet Voice Foundation  
Virginia Conservation Network  
Washington Wildlife Federation  
Western Environmental Law Center  
Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, Inc.  
Western Nebraska Resources Council  
Western Watersheds Project  
Western Wildlife Conservancy  
White Mountain Conservation League  
Wild Connections  
Wild Earth Guardians  
Wild Farm Alliance  
WILD Foundation  
Wild South  
Wild Virginia  
Wilderness Workshop  
Wildlands Network  
Wildlife Alliance of Maine  
Wildlife Conservation Advocacy Southwest  
Wildlife Land Trust  
Winter Wildlands Alliance  
Wisconsin Audubon Council  
Wolf Conservation Center  
Wolf Haven International  
Wolf Hollow  
Wyoming Hunters & Anglers Alliance  
Wyoming Outdoor Council  
Wyoming Wilderness Association  
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation  
Yellowstone to Uintas Connection  
Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative