

January 19, 2022

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Chairman
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1332 Longworth
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cliff Bentz
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1329 Longworth
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member Bentz,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we strongly urge you to support and advance the Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act (H.R. 4057). This legislation will leverage American leadership in order to expand international cooperation in combatting threats to these imperiled birds.

This Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act will enable the United States to implement the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). ACAP entered into force in 2004, and aims to improve coordination in conserving some of the most threatened bird species on the globe. Fifteen of the twenty-two species of albatross, and over half of the petrel species, are threatened with extinction.

Joining the Agreement has received bipartisan support from Republican and Democratic administrations, including from President George W. Bush, who submitted the Agreement to the Senate for advice and consent in 2008. Thirteen nations are now party to ACAP. While the United States has sent observers to the meetings, it cannot influence the proceedings through the power to vote, chair the working groups, or propose amendments.

Albatrosses and petrels are acutely vulnerable to interactions with fishing operations across the globe. An estimated 560,000 to 720,000 seabirds die every year after being hooked on fishing lines or entangled in gillnets. The U.S. is a world leader in improving bird-friendly mitigation practices to reduce accidental bycatch, and our participation in the agreement can help encourage other nations to make similar progress.

America faces a serious challenge to reverse the decline of many of our bird species. Birds are sensitive indicators of how we are protecting our environment as a whole, so this decline signals a broader crisis that Congress should act on and help reverse. Our organizations strongly believe that advancing this bill and fully investing in bird conservation programs will be essential to achieving our nation's conservation goals that are critical to supporting our environment and our economy.

Sincerely,

American Bird Conservancy
Defenders of Wildlife
National Audubon Society
National Wildlife Federation
Ocean Conservancy
World Wildlife Fund