

Multinational Species Coalition

July 26, 2023

The Honorable David Joyce
United States Representative
2065 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Dingell
United States Representative
102 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Joyce and Representative Dingell:

As members of the Multinational Species Coalition (Coalition), we are writing to express our support for the Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver Reauthorization Act (WILD Act), which would reauthorize the Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF) managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Many of the world's most iconic species are in steep decline due to a variety of factors, including poaching, habitat loss, and human-wildlife conflict. For more than 30 years, the USFWS has managed the five congressionally authorized programs that make up the MSCF, which are helping to protect elephants, rhinos, tigers, great apes, and turtles and to address the drivers of the broader biodiversity crisis. Working with partners in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, these U.S. government programs are helping to turn the tide, proving that species populations can recover when there is dedicated support for conservation, including protecting habitats, improving wildlife management, engaging and working with Indigenous and local communities on wildlife conservation, and supporting efforts to prevent poaching and wildlife trafficking.

Although the challenges facing these species are daunting, the MSCF has a strong record of success. Since 1989, the FWS has provided more than 4,500 grants totaling more than \$330 million in support of cost-effective partnerships to advance international conservation. MSCF grants have leveraged more than \$475 million in matching contributions from the agency's nearly 900 partners, substantially increasing the impact of U.S. government funding directed to conservation of these species. Due to these modest but highly effective investments, the MSCF has helped to recover tiger populations in Asia, rhino populations in Africa, and marine turtle populations in Latin America.

By renewing the MSCF for 5 years, the WILD Act will continue to fund important and innovative projects like those that prevent the poaching of the critically endangered Sumatran elephant in Indonesia; monitor the health and safety of African elephants in some of the last remaining strongholds in southern Africa; and, help to reestablish species like the Rote Island snake-necked turtle in Indonesia, which is currently extinct in the wild. Further, the bill will permit FWS to issue grants for up to 5 years, which will enable projects of greater scope and ambition.

We strongly support the WILD Act and urge its prompt passage.

Sincerely,

African Wildlife Foundation
Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Bonobo Conservation Initiative
Environmental Investigation Agency
Humane Society International
Humane Society Legislative Fund
The Humane Society of the United States
International Crane Foundation
International Elephant Foundation
International Fund for Animal Welfare
Pan African Sanctuary Alliance
Re:wild
Wild Earth Allies
WildLandscapes International
Wildlife Conservation Society
World Wildlife Fund
Zoological Association of America