



September 16, 2019

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
United States Representative
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter King
United States Representative
302 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Jeffries and King:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and our millions of supporters across the United States, we are writing to express our support for the Supporting Activities & Leadership Abroad to Move Amphibians Nearing Decline or Extinction to Recovery (SALAMANDER) Act.

Amphibians have existed on Earth since before the dinosaurs. With more than 8,000 species, they are found almost everywhere on our planet. This may seem like a large number; however, most of these creatures live in small, concentrated populations with scarce resources and requiring specific environmental conditions. As a result, an overwhelming number of these amphibians are in desperate need of conservation strategies to avoid extinction in the wild.

Amphibians are an important part of ecosystems around the globe. They serve as predators for disease vectors like mosquitoes, as well as prey for other native wildlife. Furthermore, some amphibian species have been found to produce compounds that can treat diseases in humans, including cancer. Many species remain to be researched and are at risk of being lost, along with any medicinal or other discoveries they may offer.

Amphibians are able to breathe through their skin, and this permeable skin makes them particularly vulnerable to environmental disturbances, including disease, pollution, gradual changes to temperature and climate, and other environmental factors. In fact, everywhere on Earth, their populations are decreasing to the point that many of them in the last 40 years have become extinct.

The need for amphibian conservation is even more urgent given the global spread of chytrid fungus, which some scientists have called the most destructive pathogen ever described by science, and which has so far caused the decline of 501 amphibian species. Of the affected species, 90 are now believed to be extinct in the wild, and 124 have declined in number by more than 90 percent.

In 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated the Amphibians in Decline (AID) program at the direction of Congress to help arrest this decline in amphibians. Over the course of 6 years, the program awarded more than \$1 million to over 40 projects in 25 countries, leveraging an additional \$2.6 million in matching funds to help address some of the key problems causing the decline for some species. Regrettably, cuts to the Service's budget forced the program to be suspended. The SALAMANDER Act would authorize this program, reviving an important source of funding for the global fight to save thousands of the world's most vulnerable species.

We strongly support the SALAMANDER Act and look forward to working with you to secure its passage.

Sincerely,

African Wildlife Foundation
Amphibian Survival Alliance
Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Bonobo Conservation Initiative
Born Free USA
Conservation International
Defenders of Wildlife
Environmental Investigation Agency
Global Wildlife Conservation
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
International Rhino Foundation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Rare Species Fund
Wild Earth Allies
Wildlife Conservation Society
World Wildlife Fund