

May 1, 2019

The Honorable Tom Udall
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Don Beyer
431 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: The Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act of 2019

Dear Senator Udall and Representative Beyer,

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