

## 25 Senate Democrats Urge White House to Reject Spending Bill Riders that Would Undermine Endangered Species Act Protections

*Senators: "Decisions about protecting species under the Endangered Species Act should be made based upon science – such provisions have no place in the appropriations process."*

WASHINGTON, DC– U.S. Sens. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) today led a letter to President Obama urging him to reject all spending bill riders that would undermine Endangered Species Act protections for particular species or otherwise erode the Endangered Species Act. Sens. Booker and Boxer were joined by Sens. Ed Markey (D-MA), Tom Udall (D-NM), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Pat Leahy (D-VT), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Gary Peters (D-MI), Chris Coons (D-DE), Thomas Carper (D-DE), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Jack Reed (D-RI), Bernie Sanders (D-VT), Charles Schumer (D-NY), Patty Murray (D-WA) and Mazie Hirono (D-HI).

"In 1973, as an increasing number of plant and animal species were disappearing, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act with overwhelming bipartisan support. More than 40 years later, our world's wildlife is again at a critical point. The extinction of earth's species is now at its highest rate since the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago, with human activity – including significant ecological impacts from climate change – initiating an extinction crisis on our planet. Now more than ever we need a strong, fully funded, and enforced Endangered Species Act. This law has prevented 99 percent of the species under its care from going extinct," **the Senators wrote.**

"We strongly urge that you oppose all appropriations riders that would undermine Endangered Species Act protections, including the rider that is included in both the Senate and House versions of the FY 2016 Interior appropriations bill that would remove federal protections for gray wolves," **the Senators concluded.**

Full text of the letter follows:

November 5, 2015

President Barack Obama  
The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

A record number of anti-environmental provisions undermining the Endangered Species Act have been included in the Senate and House versions of the FY 2016 Interior appropriations bill. As you work with Congress to negotiate a spending package, we urge you to flatly reject all riders that would undermine Endangered Species Act protections for particular species or otherwise erode the Act.

In 1973, as an increasing number of plant and animal species were disappearing, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act with overwhelming bipartisan support. More than 40 years later, our world's wildlife is again at a critical point. The extinction of earth's species is now at its highest rate since the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago, with human activity – including significant ecological impacts from climate change – initiating an extinction crisis on our planet. Now more than ever we need a strong, fully funded, and enforced Endangered Species Act. This law has prevented 99 percent of the species under its care from going extinct.

Unfortunately, just as we face enormous threats to our planet's biodiversity, some in Congress are seeking to undermine the Endangered Species Act. More than 80 legislative proposals have already been introduced in this Congress to undermine key pieces of this vital law and to block protections for particular species. All such legislative attacks – including the record number of FY 2016 Interior appropriations riders – undermine the Endangered Species Act, which calls for science-based decision-making to protect all wildlife, plants, and fish that are in danger of extinction.

We strongly urge that you oppose all appropriations riders that would undermine Endangered Species Act protections, including the rider that is included in both the Senate and House versions of the FY 2016 Interior appropriations bill that would remove federal protections for gray wolves.

We appreciate the strong Statement of Administration Policy (SAP) you issued on June 23, opposing sections of the House Department of the Interior Appropriations Bill, H.R. 2822, that would result in “limiting the ability of the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service] to properly protect, based on the best available science, a number of species, including the greater sage grouse, northern long-eared bat, and certain gray wolf populations.” We agree with you that decisions about protecting species under the Endangered Species Act should be made based upon science – such provisions have no place in the appropriations process.

A national poll conducted in June 2015 found that ninety percent of American voters support the Endangered Species Act. In standing up for this critical law, you will have our strong support as well as that of an overwhelming majority of the public.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.