

Adirondack Council * Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve * Adirondack Wildlife Refuge * Adirondacks to Algonquin Collaborative * American Forests * Alliance for the Great Lakes * Blue Ridge Land Conservancy
California Invasive Plant Council * Center for Biological Diversity * Center for Large Landscape Conservation
Clark Fork Coalition * Cold Hollow to Canada * Conservation Ecology LLC * Conservation Northwest
Conservation Science Partners * Cougar Rewilding Foundation * Craighead Institute * Defenders of Wildlife
Downeast Salmon Federation * Endangered Species Coalition * Environmental Protection Information Center
Florida Wildlife Corridor * Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf & Wildlife * Greater Yellowstone Coalition
Harris Center for Conservation Education * Hells Canyon Preservation Council * Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust
Idaho Conservation League * Kentucky Natural Lands Trust * Klamath Forest Alliance * League of Humane Voters-
Wisconsin Chapter * Long Branch Environmental Education Center * Los Padres ForestWatch
Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust * National Parks and Conservation Association * Northcoast Environmental Center
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association * Open Space Institute * Oregon Wild * Radnor to River
Red Wolf Coalition * Rocky Mountain Wild * Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition * Sierra Club
South Florida Wildlands Association * The Rewilding Institute * The Wilderness Society
Turtle Island Restoration Network * Two Countries One Forest * Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition
Vermont Natural Resources Council * Western Environmental Law Center * Western Watersheds Project
Wild Earth Guardians * Wild Farm Alliance * Wildlands Network * Wild South * Wild Virginia
Winter Wildlands Alliance * Wolf Haven International * Wyoming Outdoor Council * Yellowstone to Uintas Connection
Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative

December 6, 2016

The Honorable Don Beyer
431 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: The Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act of 2016

Dear Representative Beyer,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we write to express our strong support for the **Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act of 2016**. 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,¹ 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 Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act establishes a National Wildlife Corridors System that provides a framework to ensure that fish, wildlife and plants are able to move between habitats for migration, dispersal, genetic exchange and climate adaptation. The bill directs federal land and water management agencies to collaborate with each other, as well as

¹ 1. Chivian, E. and A. Bernstein (eds.) 2008. *Sustaining life: How human health depends on biodiversity*. Center for Health and the Global Environment. Oxford University Press. New York

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 Native Species Habitats and Corridors GIS Database to inform corridor designation. Establishing a National Wildlife Corridors System 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. In 2011, hunters spent \$34 billion, anglers spent \$41.8 billion, and wildlife watchers spent \$55 billion nationally. It 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.²

Increasingly, wildlife corridor protection has bipartisan support around the country. In 2007, the Western Governors' Association approved a resolution that established a Corridor Protection Initiative,³ issued an extensive Wildlife Corridors Initiative report,⁴ and approved the Protecting Wildlife Migration Corridors and Crucial Wildlife Habitat in the West policy resolution.⁵ In 2016, 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.⁶

Federal agencies and states are also beginning to work together to protect wildlife corridors. In 2008, 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.

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 Council
Elizabethtown, New York

Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve
Niskayuna, New York

Adirondack Wildlife Refuge & Rehabilitation Center
Wilmington, New York

² See <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/08034/03.cfm>.

³ See <https://www.westgov.org/wildlife-corridors-and-crucial-habitat>.

⁴ See <http://www.westgov.org/images/dmdocuments/wildlife08.pdf>.

⁵ See <https://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/wy/information/NEPA/pfodocs/anticline/revdr-comments/eg.Par.89268.File.dat/02Bio-attach14.pdf>.

⁶ See <http://www.coneo.org/Data/Sites/1/media/40-3-ecological-connectivity-en.pdf>

Adirondacks to Algonquin Collaborative
Wellesley Island, NY

American Forests
Washington, DC

Alliance for the Great Lakes
Chicago, Illinois

Blue Ridge Land Conservancy
Roanoke, Virginia

California Invasive Plant Council
Berkeley, California

Center for Biological Diversity
Tucson, Arizona

Center for Large Landscape Conservation
Bozeman, Montana

Clark Fork Coalition
Missoula, Montana

Cold Hollow to Canada
Montgomery Center, Vermont

Conservation Ecology LLC
Hendersonville, North Carolina

Conservation Northwest
Bellingham, Washington

Conservation Science Partners
Fort Collins, Colorado

Cougar Rewilding Foundation
Hanover, West Virginia

Craighead Institute
Bozeman, Montana

Defenders of Wildlife
Washington, DC

Downeast Salmon Federation
Columbia Falls, Maine

Endangered Species Coalition
Washington, DC

Environmental Protection Information Center
Arcata, California

Florida Wildlife Corridor
Tampa, Florida

Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf & Wildlife
Madison, Wisconsin

Greater Yellowstone Coalition
Bozeman, Montana

Harris Center for Conservation Education
Hancock, New Hampshire

Hells Canyon Preservation Council
Le Grande, Oregon

Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust
Washington, DC

Idaho Conservation League
Boise, Idaho

Long Branch Environmental Education Center
Leicester, North Carolina

Los Padres ForestWatch
Santa Barbara, California

Kentucky Natural Lands Trust
Berea, Kentucky

Klamath Forest Alliance
Orleans, California

League of Humane Voters – Wisconsin Chapter
Star Prairie, Wisconsin

Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust
Portland, Maine

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Oregon City, Oregon

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Nashville, Tennessee

Red Wolf Coalition
Columbia, North Carolina

Rocky Mountain Wild
Denver, Colorado

Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition
Seattle, Washington

Sierra Club
Oakland, California

South Florida Wildlands Association
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

The Rewilding Institute
Albuquerque, New Mexico

The Wilderness Society
Washington, DC

Turtle Island Restoration Network
Olema, California

Two Countries One Forest
Toronto, Canada

Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition
Houghton, Michigan

Vermont Natural Resources Council
Montpelier, Vermont

Western Environmental Law Center
Eugene, Oregon

Western Watersheds Project
Laramie, Wyoming

Wild Earth Guardians
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Wild Farm Alliance
Watsonville, California

Wildlands Network
Seattle, Washington

Wild South
Asheville, North Carolina

Wild Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

Winter Wildlands Alliance
Boise, Idaho

Wolf Haven International
Tenino, Washington

Wyoming Outdoor Council
Lander, Wyoming

Yellowstone to Uintas Connection
Paris, Idaho

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