

May 22, 2025

Dear Senator Merkley:

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we are writing to express our support for your resolution calling on the federal government to establish a National Biodiversity Strategy to protect biodiversity for current and future generations. This approach would articulate the nation's commitment to a whole-of-government response to tackling species extinction and addressing the primary threats to biodiversity, ecosystem services and ultimately, humanity.

Our planet is facing an alarming and catastrophic biodiversity crisis, largely driven by human activities. Habitat destruction, overexploitation of wildlife, climate change, introduction of invasive species, and pollution are all threatening our planet's ecosystems. Recent scientific studies have documented this devastating loss worldwide, including the ground-breaking 2019 Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services assessment warning that about one million species are at risk of extinction.<sup>1</sup> In North America alone, nearly 3 billion birds have disappeared since 1970.<sup>2</sup> This decline is further exacerbated by the fact that humans have severely altered 75% of the world's lands and 66% of its marine environments.<sup>3</sup>

The loss of biodiversity presents a direct threat to the security, health, and well-being of people in the United States by reducing valuable ecosystem services like zoonotic disease buffering, water filtration, and pollination. This loss disproportionately impacts communities of color, low income and tribal communities, and others that have been systematically and deliberately targeted for environmentally degrading activities and excluded from conservation efforts.

While multiple federal agencies are already tasked with protecting and conserving biodiversity in the U.S., there is no coordinating policy to maximize these efforts or facilitate collaboration among them. In fact, the national effort to address the biodiversity crisis has fallen further behind due to woeful underfunding and inconsistent administration of key laws and programs at times over the past decade. We need to reverse the damage and make substantial forward progress.

As detailed in the resolution, a National Biodiversity Strategy would address the five drivers of biodiversity loss, secure and restore critical ecosystem services, and reestablish the nation as a global leader in biodiversity conservation. This approach would mobilize a stronger, more coordinated, national response and create a blueprint for effectively tackling the challenge.

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<sup>1</sup> Diaz, S., J. Settele, E. S. Brondizio, et al. 2019. "Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services." Available at: <https://www.ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment>.

<sup>2</sup> Rosenberg, L. V. et al. 2019. "Decline of the North American avifauna." *Science* 366 (6461): 120-124.

<sup>3</sup> Diaz, S. et al. 2019.

The Strategy would direct federal agencies to pursue actions within existing laws and policies and promote innovation for developing new tools to protect biodiversity. Among other actions to comprehensively reduce and reverse biodiversity loss, the Strategy would advance, reaffirm, and clarify the wildlife value of key goals including responding to the climate crisis, preventing future pandemics, and addressing racial equity and justice. It would also call on the federal government to elevate the nation's role in advancing biodiversity conservation globally through enhanced U.S. leadership, diplomatic engagement, and investment.

The biodiversity crisis is not a far-away problem: it is unfolding here and now in the U.S. Our nation should play a leading role in tackling the challenge. As expressed in the resolution, a National Biodiversity Strategy to protect our natural legacy, for today and for generations to come, is a visionary and urgently needed response to the biodiversity crisis.

Thank you for championing this important measure.

Sincerely,

American Bird Conservancy  
Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy  
Animal Legal Defense Fund  
Animal Protection Voters  
Animal Welfare Institute  
Attorneys for Animals  
Bat Conservation International  
ColoradoWild  
Conservation Law Foundation  
Conservation Northwest  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Earthjustice Action  
Endangered Habitats League  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environmental Defenders of McHenry County  
Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC)  
FOUR PAWS USA  
Friends of Blackwater, Inc.  
Friends of Merrymeeting Bay  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
GreenLatinos  
Guardians of the Wolves  
Hoosier Environmental Council

Humane World Action Fund  
Humane World for Animals  
Idaho Conservation League  
International Fund for Animal Welfare  
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute  
Kettle Range Conservation Group  
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center  
Large Carnivore Fund  
Law Offices of Laurie E. Dallos, PLLC  
Los Angeles Audubon Society  
Los Padres ForestWatch  
National Aquarium  
Native Organizers Alliance  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
New Hampshire Audubon  
North Central Washington Audubon Society  
Ohio Animal Advocates  
OneNature  
Oregon Natural Desert Association  
Oregon Wild  
People & Pollinators Action Network  
Public Interest Coalition  
Reintegrating Wildness, a Project of the Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative  
Resource Renewal Institute  
Rocky Mountain Wild  
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council  
Save Animals Facing Extinction  
Sawtooth Science Institute  
Sierra Club  
Sierra Foothills Audubon Society  
Silvix Resources  
South San Juan Chapter of Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
Southern Environmental Law Center  
Species Unite  
Texas Humane Legislation Network  
The 06 Legacy  
Trap Free Montana  
Turtle Island Restoration Network  
United Plant Savers  
Voters For Animal Rights  
Western Watersheds Project

Western Wildlife Conservancy  
WildEarth Guardians  
Wildlife for All  
Wolf Conservation Center  
Wyoming Untrapped  
Wyoming Wildlife Advocates  
Yaak Valley Forest Council