

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 16, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Leahy:

As you work to assemble funding legislation for the 2018 fiscal year, we write to respectfully request that you retain language supporting important international conservation and clean energy programs in the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs legislation. Congress has funded these programs for decades, and one or both of the FY18 House or Senate products reflect support for these programs.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF): Established in 1992 with the support of President George H.W. Bush, the GEF has enjoyed decades of bipartisan support for its long-standing efforts to reduce mercury pollution, combat desertification, protect waterways, and address other environmental challenges that threaten U.S. long-term strategic interests. The Senate FY18 subcommittee report recommends \$136 million in a standalone contribution to the GEF under Multilateral Assistance (Title V). The House-passed FY18 bill redirects Title III funds from the Economic Support Fund to the GEF on a grant only basis; we would prefer that the GEF receive standalone funding via Title V, as is customary, and that funding be at a level that completes the US contribution to the most recent four-year GEF funding cycle (GEF 6), which ends June 2018.

Sustainable Landscapes: These programs promote sustainable farming and land use overseas, while also helping to level the playing field for U.S. forestry and agriculture companies -- firms that employ nearly 800,000 Americans and exported over \$140 billion worth of goods in 2015 -- by improving investment environments and ensuring standards enforcement. The Senate FY18 subcommittee report provides \$123 million for these programs under Bilateral Economic Assistance.

Clean Energy Programs: This suite of programs help developing country allies invest in clean energy and energy efficiency while also helping streamline regulatory systems to promote better investment climates for U.S. energy companies. This funding also helps support the "Electrify Africa" program authorized by Congress in 2015 (PL No: 114-121), which builds the capacity of African nations' domestic energy sectors, enhancing energy security and combating poverty in the process. The Senate FY18 subcommittee report recommends \$177.7 million to support these programs under Bilateral Economic Assistance.

Adaptation: Adaptation programs help developing countries build their resilience to severe weather events like droughts, floods, and storm events by hardening water and power infrastructure,

improving agricultural productivity, and protecting public health. Adaptation programs also help countries utilize predictive, scientific data to better prepare for impacts -- helping stretch U.S. development dollars further by ensuring smart, adaptive in-country policies. The Senate FY18 subcommittee report recommends \$176.7 million to support these programs under Bilateral Economic Assistance.

Biodiversity Conservation: This funding allows the U.S. to partner with countries who face serious challenges in protecting and preserving their natural resources, including critically endangered wildlife and globally important fish stocks and tropical forests. USAID Biodiversity Conservation programs help to combat threats such as habitat loss, illegal trafficking in wildlife, timber and fish, natural resource scarcities can lead to conflict, and other pressures. In partnership with other agencies, including the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, these programs support conservation work in developing countries throughout Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific. The Senate FY18 subcommittee report recommends \$269 million to support these programs under Bilateral Economic Assistance.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): The U.S. has participated in and supported the IPCC since its creation in 1988. The IPCC is an intergovernmental body that conducts periodic comprehensive assessments of the state-of-the-art of climate change science and technology. The U.S. is also a long-standing party to the UNFCCC international agreement, which the U.S. Senate unanimously ratified following its approval by President George H.W. Bush in 1992. While having an announced an intent to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, the Trump Administration has stated repeatedly that they intend to remain a party to the UNFCCC and fully participate with the body. These funds are part of the U.S. ongoing contribution that allows the work of the UNFCCC to move forward. The Senate FY18 subcommittee report recommends \$10 million to support the IPCC and UNFCCC under International Operations & Programs (IO&P).

Multilateral contribution authority: The President's FY18 budget request reflects, and the Senate FY18 subcommittee bill includes, the provision of State Department contribution authority for multilateral trust funds under the Economic Support Fund (ESF) and Development Assistance (DA) accounts -- authority that has previously been provided by Congress in past fiscal years. We believe this authority should be continued, given that it improves programming efficiency without impinging on congressional oversight prerogatives.

The demonstrable good that these programs do -- and the long-standing support they have received from Republicans and Democrats in the White House and Congress alike -- warrants their continued funding in the final FY18 appropriations package.

Sincerely,



BENJAMIN L. CARDIN
United States Senator



JEFFREY A. MERKLEY
United States Senator



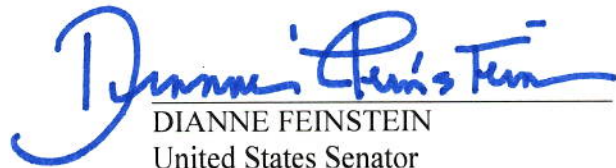
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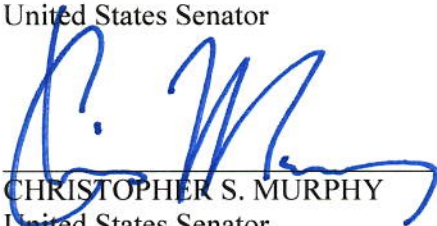
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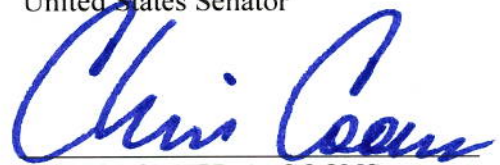
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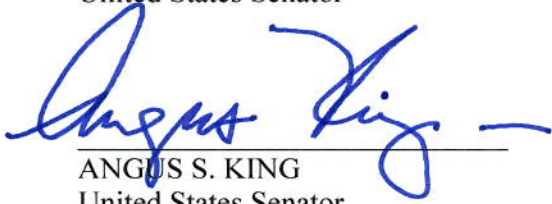
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