

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 12, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations and
Subcommittee on Defense
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
125 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
131 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Department of State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations and
Subcommittee on the Department of State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Durbin, Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, Chairman Graham, and Ranking Member Leahy:

As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Defense; Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies (Interior); and State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies (SFOPS) Appropriations Acts, we urge you to maintain funding for programs that protect biodiversity and address the global crisis of wildlife trafficking at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), State Department (State), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). We also request that you consider providing resources to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and the intelligence community (IC) as they work to scale up their efforts in this space.

Worth an estimated \$8–23 billion annually, the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products is carried out by highly organized transnational criminal networks that connect poachers in Africa and other regions to high-end black markets, mostly in Asia. These sophisticated criminal elements have fueled a significant uptick in wildlife poaching and trafficking activities, creating significant ecological, economic, and national security threats. In response to this escalating crisis, Congress passed the bipartisan END Wildlife Trafficking Act in 2016, which reinforced and built on existing efforts to implement a national strategy to combat wildlife trafficking.

President Trump affirmed the need for this coordinated effort by including wildlife trafficking in his 2017 executive order for combating transnational organized crime.

The U.S. Congress has directed funding through the appropriations process to combat wildlife trafficking since FY 2014. We thank you for your previous support for programs that address this critical issue and urge you to continue strong funding for solutions to these threats. These investments are helping to support U.S. security and economic interests while combating transnational organized crime and building economic stability among our strategic partners around the globe. It is critical that existing programs and funding be maintained to ensure investments realize significant anti-poaching, anti-trafficking, and demand reduction impacts.

Combating Wildlife Trafficking Programs at the Department of State and USAID

We want to thank you for including \$90.7 million in dedicated funding for combating wildlife poaching and trafficking in FY 2019, including \$50 million in International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funds. State INCLE and USAID are using these funds to invest in projects that strengthen anti-poaching and wildlife law enforcement, strengthen judicial systems and rule of law, disrupt transit hubs, and reduce consumer demand for illegal wildlife products. For FY 2020, we request \$100.6 million in dedicated funding, including \$60 million for INCLE funds to expand their geographic scope to Latin and South America and to support the deployment of high-tech solutions and efforts to combat illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing.

USAID Biodiversity Programs

Most U.S. foreign assistance for on-the-ground conservation is delivered through USAID and its robust portfolio of conservation and forestry programs. These help protect some of the largest, most at-risk natural landscapes and the livelihoods of millions of people who directly depend on natural resources for their survival and economic growth. These programs work in partnership with foreign governments, civil society, the private sector, and local communities to address direct threats to biodiversity loss and the underlying drivers of species extinction. While most efforts are focused on biologically significant areas, USAID also strengthens policies, raises public awareness, and tackles global challenges like wildlife trafficking. For FY 2020, we request at least FY 2019 enacted levels for the USAID Biodiversity Programs.

The Global Environment Facility

The Global Environment Facility (the GEF) is an independent international financial institution that provides grants to support sustainable use and improved management of natural resources. Operating in 183 countries, projects unite donor and recipient countries with U.S. corporations and NGOs. America's investment in the GEF also yields a very high rate of return. Every dollar America invests in the GEF generates another \$40 from other countries and partners for the GEF and its programs. The GEF has supported the improved cooperation and governance of one-third of the world's large marine ecosystems. GEF support has also been critical to placing 12 percent of the world's terrestrial area under protection, resulting in 3,300 protected areas that span 2.1 billion acres and contain at least 700 globally threatened species. In addition to playing a leading role in protecting the world's forests and fisheries, the GEF has begun funding programs to combat poaching and wildlife trafficking around the world to strengthen national laws, law enforcement, monitor wildlife populations, and reduce demand. For FY 2020, we request level

funding of \$139.5 million, including \$136.5 million for the second installment of the U.S. contribution to the seventh replenishment of the GEF.

FWS Office of Law Enforcement

The FWS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) investigates wildlife crimes, regulates wildlife trade, and works in partnership with international, state, and tribal counterparts to conserve wildlife resources. The office plays an integral role in the ongoing efforts to combat the global crisis of wildlife poaching and trafficking, given the strong involvement of transnational criminal networks in the growing poaching crisis. Maintaining funding for this program will support efforts to maximize the scope and effectiveness of FWS' response to the international wildlife trafficking crisis by strengthening forensic capabilities and expanding the capacity of their Special Investigations Unit. It will also ensure OLE has an adequate number of law enforcement agents deployed to enforce laws against wildlife and timber trafficking in the U.S. effectively and allow the agency to continue to support coordinated law enforcement actions against wildlife trafficking overseas through the deployment of FWS attachés in targeted U.S. embassies. We urge you to include \$85 million for OLE in FY 2020.

Office of the Director of National Intelligence

The 2018 Strategic Assessment Review from the Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking highlighted the work that ODNI and the IC have completed this past year to document the convergence of wildlife trafficking with other criminal activity. This work has demonstrated substantial overlaps in the trafficking supply chain, a conclusion that had previously rested on anecdotal evidence. They are now working to create a knowledge management framework to further enhance and share the valuable data being gathered. We urge you to provide sufficient funding in FY 2020 for ODNI and the IC for their work supporting law enforcement and foreign partners in disrupting global criminal wildlife trafficking networks, including the development of a knowledge management framework.

These important U.S. government investments protect against the illegal trafficking of wildlife and other natural resources while protecting globally important landscapes and natural resources. In doing so, they serve as a stabilizing force in fragile regions, protect our interests overseas, and enhance America's economic and national security. We urge you to continue at least level funding for combating wildlife trafficking and international conservation programs in FY 2020 Interior and SFOPS Appropriations Acts and to include support for combating wildlife trafficking for ODNI and the IC in the Defense Appropriations Act. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



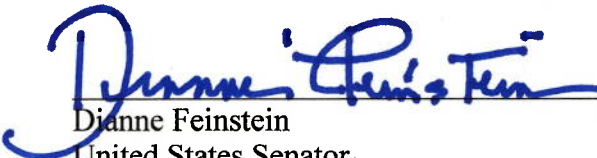
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United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



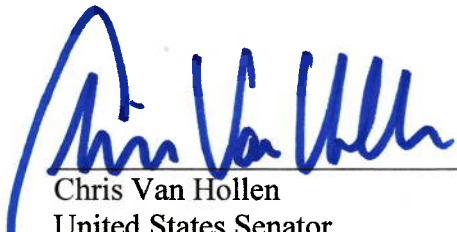
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Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



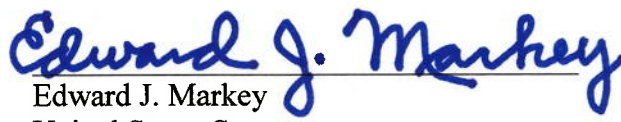
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



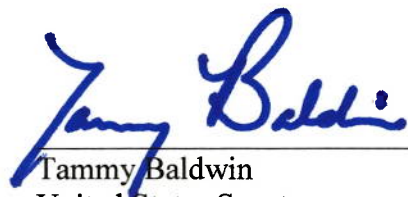
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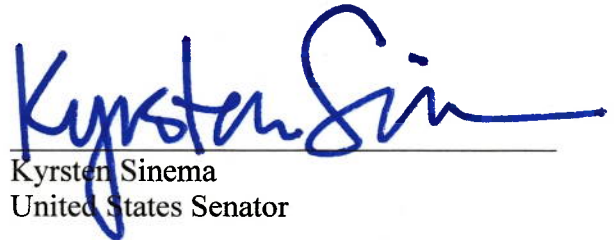


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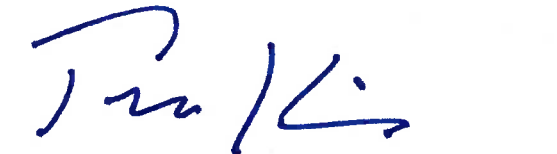

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