

January 17th, 2022

The Honorable Jay Phillip Obernolte
1029 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Obernolte,

The Southern California Chapter of The Wildlife Society is writing to **request your cosponsorship of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 2773)**, introduced in April 2021 by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE). This legislation would provide state and tribal wildlife agencies with a vital source of funding needed to proactively and cost-effectively conserve America's at-risk wildlife populations.

Founded in 1937, The Wildlife Society and its 15,000 professional and associated members work to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife biologists and managers to sustain wildlife populations and habitat through science-based management and conservation. The Southern California Chapter of The Wildlife Society covers all of San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, and Imperial counties and represents the wildlife professionals there that devote themselves to the myriad of issues that face the wildlife populations in what is simultaneously one of the most biologically diverse and most urbanized areas in the Western United States.

Our state has 678 at-risk species as identified in 2015 by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in their congressionally-mandated conservation action blueprint, known as State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAP). The 8th District features a tremendous diversity of habitats, from mountains to deserts. The District is home to the Mohave ground squirrel and Mojave desert tortoise which occupy similar areas and would benefit from a holistic approach to their conservation; the California spotted owl, which will benefit greatly from proactive conservation and management efforts; and finally the black toad which is not found anywhere else in the world outside the 8th District.

Nationally, conservation efforts for these at-risk species are critically underfunded, only receiving about \$60 million annually through the existing [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) program. This is not nearly enough for states and tribes to plan for multi-year conservation and recovery projects in the hopes to prevent costly measures, such as Endangered Species Act listings, from occurring. Conservation funding for common and at-risk species before they become imperiled is a fantastic preventative strategy that creates local conservation jobs and saves money in the long run, all while giving at-risk species a greater chance of successfully surviving into the future.

Passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act would match an appropriate solution to the scale of the challenges faced in the district. By dedicating \$1.3 billion annually for the adequate implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans, and \$97.5 million annually for tribal agencies to plan long-term conservation projects, wildlife professionals will have the resources needed to hold the nation's wildlife in the public trust for generations to come.

Thank you for considering this important legislation. If you have any questions regarding the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and the Southern California Chapter of The Wildlife Society's support for this legislation, please feel free to reach out to Kiran Stacy, Chair of the Southern California Chapter's Conservation Affairs Committee and resident of the 8th District, at cacaffairs.southerncatws@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Kiran Stacy
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