

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

February 8, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write today to encourage you to establish a National Biodiversity Strategy to protect and restore nature and secure our rich biodiversity for generations to come. We commend the steps you have taken so far to address the compounding environmental crises we face, from tackling climate change head-on to confronting racial inequities and committing to conserve thirty percent of our lands and waters by 2030. As part of these ongoing efforts, a National Biodiversity Strategy would strengthen the nation's response to escalating species extinctions and restore America's role as a global leader in biodiversity conservation.

The global scientific consensus is that as many as one million species are at risk of extinction.¹ Studies have shown that we are losing species and their habitats faster than ever before. For example, in North America alone, nearly 3 billion birds have disappeared since 1970.² The loss of biodiversity presents a direct threat to our security, health, and well-being. As species decline and habitats degrade, we lose critical ecosystem services that provide us with clean water, fertile soils, food, and the very air we breathe. The loss of nature and biodiversity also disproportionately impacts communities of color, low-income communities, tribal communities, and others that have historically faced environmental injustice.

Biodiversity loss has clear economic impacts. In 2020, a report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that the annual value of terrestrial ecosystem services are roughly equivalent to annual global gross domestic product,³ while the World Economic Forum's 2020 *Global Risks Report* identified biodiversity loss as one of the top five threats to the global economy in terms of both its likelihood and its impact.⁴ The loss and over-exploitation of nature is also at the root of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic and other zoonotic diseases.

Your administration has already laid a strong foundation for tackling the biodiversity crisis. The *America the Beautiful* initiative and its 30x30 goal directly addresses two of the key drivers of biodiversity loss: habitat destruction and climate change. While habitat destruction is a primary

¹ 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>.

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

³ Arneeth, Almut, Denton, Fatima, et al. 2020. "Climate Change and Land: An IPCC Special Report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems. Chapter 1: Framing and context." Available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/chapter-1/>.

⁴ World Economic Forum. The Global Risks Report 2020. Available at: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risk_Report_2020.pdf.

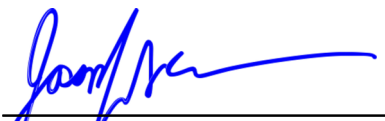
driver of global biodiversity loss, more than half of the current crisis is due to three other drivers: over-exploitation of wildlife, pollution, and invasive species.⁵ A National Biodiversity Strategy would build on existing policy initiatives while providing the strategic, comprehensive, and whole-of-government approach urgently needed to secure our nation's rich biodiversity.

A National Biodiversity Strategy, as laid out in the bipartisan H.Res.69, should address the five drivers of biodiversity loss, secure and restore critical ecosystem services, promote social equity and environmental justice, and coordinate a strong national response to tackling the biodiversity crisis both at home and abroad. The Strategy should direct federal agencies to pursue actions within existing laws and policies and identify where new ones may need to be developed to protect biodiversity. The collaborative and inclusive approach outlined in H.Res.69, involving extensive public input from various stakeholders, directly reflects the approach taken in *America the Beautiful*. A National Biodiversity Strategy would also help elevate America's role in advancing biodiversity conservation globally through enhanced U.S. leadership, diplomatic engagement, and investment.

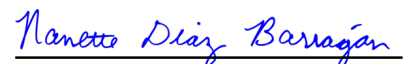
2021 was critical for global efforts to reverse nature loss, and there is more important work ahead. Part two of the 15th UN Biodiversity Conference will begin this summer, and ahead of this critical global convention of the parties, we ask that you demonstrate the leadership of the United States on this issue through the creation of a National Biodiversity Strategy. Only through a strategic and comprehensive approach can the U.S. government help to meet the scope and scale of the biodiversity crisis and help lead the world in protecting and beginning to restore nature over the coming decade.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with your administration on this critically needed strategy.

Sincerely,



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

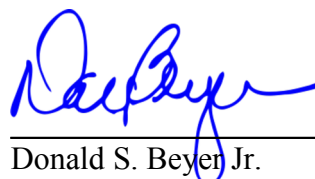


Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

⁵ Diaz, S. et al. 2019.



Karen Bass
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Donald S. Beyer Jr.
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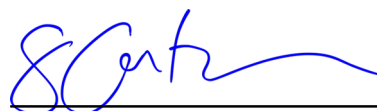
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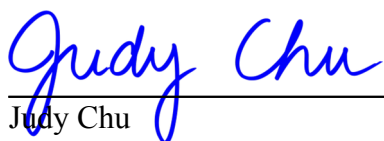
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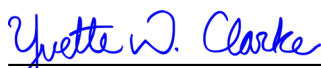
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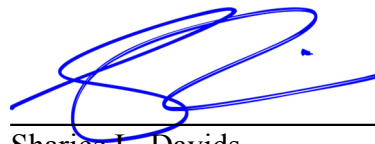
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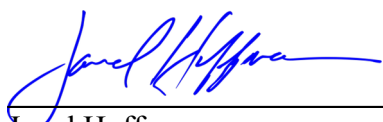
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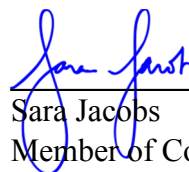
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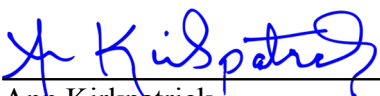
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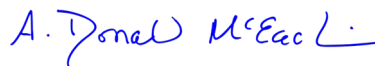
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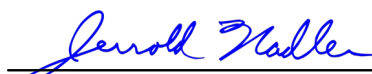
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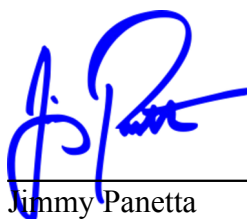
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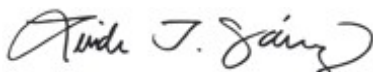
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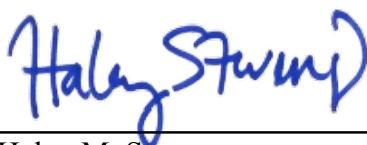
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