

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2012

The Honorable Michael K. Simpson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6023

The Honorable James P. Moran
Ranking Democratic Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Moran:

We are writing to request your continued support for the Multinational Species Conservation Funds (MSCF). Over the past two decades, with strong bipartisan support, these popular and highly effective programs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) have provided seed money for public-private partnerships that conserve wild tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, great apes, and marine turtles in their native habitats. These programs are critical to FWS efforts to prevent the extinction of species that the American public cares passionately about but which live outside of U.S. borders.

The MSCF helps to protect some of the planet's most charismatic and most important species. By doing so, they also help sustain large areas of wilderness, home to a wide variety of flora and fauna and build capacity for conservation in the developing world. Together with the Wildlife Without Borders program, these investments have proven their value by protecting wildlife populations and essential habitats, supporting local livelihoods in some of the poorest countries, promoting U.S. leadership in conservation, and protecting U.S. interests in key parts of the world. They are also an excellent investment: their very modest funding has an outsize impact and leverages three or four times as much in matching funds from corporations, conservation groups, and national governments.

The need for these funds has never been greater. In Central Africa, gangs of heavily armed poachers are rapidly wiping out African elephants to supply the illegal ivory trade. Tigers are poached for their pelts and their body parts, which are used to supply exotic products to Asian black markets such as tiger bone wine, while great apes are increasingly killed in African jungles to be sold as bushmeat. Experts suggest the value of such illegal wildlife trade ranges from \$2 billion to \$6 billion rivaling weapons and narcotics trade. Forest conversion and the encroachment of human development threaten Asian elephants in South East Asia, while human degradation of critical habitat threatens


all six endangered species of marine turtles, which depend on specific beaches for nesting and marine habitats for foraging. Finally, rhinos are in crisis due to a dramatic increase in poaching to supply Asian demand for rhino horn. In South Africa, 448 rhinos were killed in 2011 – more than one per day and nearly four times the number killed only two years ago. In contrast, not a single rhino was poached in Nepal last year—a success that was due in large part to FWS-supported conservation efforts.

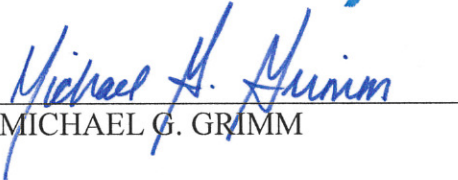
Given the proven success of these programs, the critical needs they help to address, their broad-based support among key stakeholders, and the enormous constituent interest they generate, we recommend their overall funding be commensurate with the President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2013. We further ask the subcommittee to ensure the proceeds generated from the sale of MSCF semipostal stamps by the U.S. Postal Service are treated as supplementary to annually appropriated funds consistent with the requirement of Section 2(c)(1)(B) of the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-241).

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,


DON YOUNG



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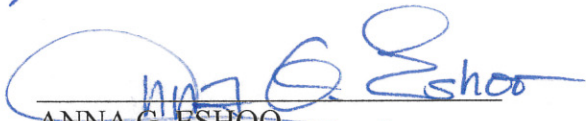

FRANK PALLONE, JR.


ELIOT L. ENGEL

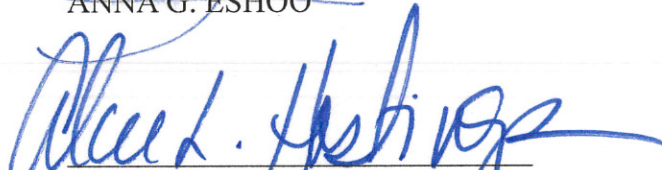

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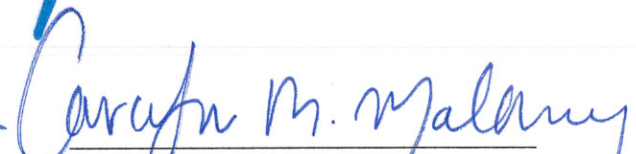

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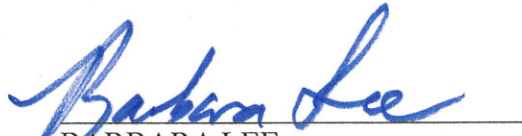

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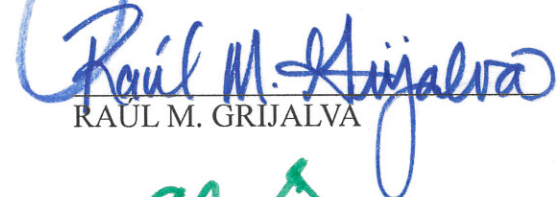

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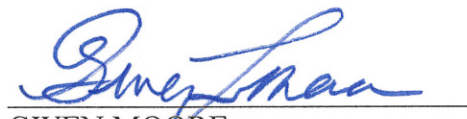

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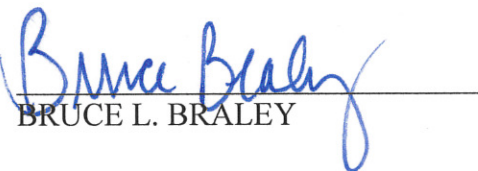

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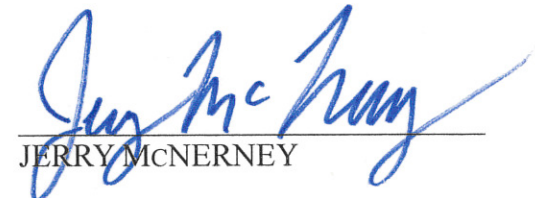

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