

November 14, 2016

To: Honorable Members of Congress

Re: Opposition to riders overturning wildlife protection rules on federally-funded National Wildlife Refuges and National Preserves in Alaska

Dear Members of Congress:

We, the 83 undersigned wildlife and environmental protection organizations, ask you to oppose wasteful and damaging riders to overturn or defund newly-enacted rules protecting native carnivores from egregious killing methods on 96 million acres of land on National Wildlife Refuges and National Preserve lands in Alaska.ⁱ These methods include baiting brown bears, trapping bears with cruel leghold traps and snares, using airplanes to scout, land, and shoot brown bears, and killing mother black bears, wolves and coyotes and their dependent young at their den sites.

As organizations dedicated to the protection and preservation of wildlife and ecosystem balance, we are encouraged that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Park Service (NPS) now prohibit the aforementioned practices on their Alaska lands. Without question, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's unsustainable and unscientific practices are affecting native carnivores in and around those areas. Trappers and hunters have lured Denali's highly valued and much-treasured wolves outside the safety of the Park's borders to be killed, resulting in a rapid decline—from 45 percent to 6 percent—in wolf sightings by visitors to Denali National Park and Preserve over just a few years.ⁱⁱ The state's predator control practices have also wiped out Denali's entire East Fork Pack, ending decades of groundbreaking research.ⁱⁱⁱ And the NPS is also now ending a decades-long research project on wolf packs in Alaska's Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, because state officials have killed so many of the Preserve's wolves when they wandered outside of its boundaries.^{iv}

The NPS and the FWS have made it clear: predator control on their lands within the state of Alaska is simply not unacceptable. The practice is also not backed by sound science; numerous studies have demonstrated that killing large numbers of native carnivores such as brown bears, black bears, and wolves will not make ungulate herds more abundant for human hunters.

Nor are these practices supported by the majority of Alaskans, who indicated in a recent statewide poll their support for banning cruel methods of killing on federal lands in their state.^v What they do support, however, is the influx of tourism revenue brought into their state by the throngs of people from around the world who travel there each year for the unique opportunity to see bears, wolves, coyotes, river otters, wolverines, and lynx in America's national preserves and refuges—alive and well, not stuffed or posed in a trophy room. In its 2016 economic report, the NPS found: "In 2015, park visitors spent an estimated \$1.2 billion in local gateway regions while visiting NPS lands in Alaska. These expenditures supported a total of 17.6 thousand jobs, \$595.5 million in labor income, \$1 billion in value added, and \$1.7 billion in economic output in the Alaska economy."^{vi} Additionally, U.S. government records show that wildlife watchers outnumber hunters in Alaska by a factor of five, and that wildlife watchers also spend much more money – in excess of \$2 billion annually, vs. \$4.3 million by hunters.^{vii}

It is important to keep in mind that the rules passed by the National Park Service (NPS) and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) do not restrict subsistence hunting pursuant to Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), nor do they restrict the taking of wildlife for public safety purposes or defense of property. The FWS and the NPS would continue to maintain their jurisdiction over National Wildlife Refuges and National Preserves in Alaska, which are federal public lands held in trust for all Americans, not just a few trophy hunters and trappers.

Therefore, we ask that you oppose any rider or amendment to defund or repeal the NPS and FWS rules, which are so vital to protecting wildlife on those federal lands—supported by American taxpayers—from inhumane and unsustainable killing methods.

Sincerely,

Nicole Paquette
Vice President, Wildlife Protection
The Humane Society of the United States
Washington, D.C.

Sophia DiPietro
Director
All Species Kinship
Battle Creek, Michigan

Mike Garrity
Executive Director
Alliance for the Wild Rockies
Helena, Montana

Richard Patch
Vice President, Federal Affairs
**The American Society for the Prevention
of Cruelty to Animals**
Washington, DC

Stephen Wells
Executive Director
Animal Legal Defense Fund
Cotati, California

Jessica Johnson
Chief Legislative Officer
**Animal Protection Voters and Animal
Protection of New Mexico**
Albuquerque, NM

Joanna Grossman, PhD
Federal Policy Advisor
Animal Welfare Institute
Washington, DC

Lisa Avery, JD, MBA
Executive Director
Animals and Society Institute
Los Angeles, California

Sarah Stewart
President
Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Chris Palmer
Professor
Center for Environmental Filmmaking
Washington, DC

Becky Peters
President
Bitterroot Audubon
Hamilton, Montana

Adam M. Roberts
Chief Executive Officer
Born Free USA
Washington, DC

Deborah Robbins Millman
Director
Cape Wildlife Center
Barnstable, Massachusetts

Louise Shimmel
Executive Director
Cascades Raptor Center
Eugene, Oregon

Nick Cady
Legal Director
Cascadia Wildlands
Eugene, Oregon

Brendan Cummings
Senior Counsel
Center for Biological Diversity
Tucson, Arizona

John Buckley
Executive Director
Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center
Twain Harte, California

Noelle Almrud
 Director
Cleveland Amory Black Beauty Ranch
 Murchison, Texas

Maureen Finnerty
 Chair
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks
 Washington, DC

Denise Boggs
 Executive Director
Conservation Congress
 Livingston, Montana

John Fitzpatrick
 Director
Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology
 Ithaca, New York

Penelope Maldonado
 Executive Director
The Cougar Fund
 Jackson, Wyoming

Janet Kessler
 Co-Director
CoyoteCoexistence.com
 San Francisco, California

Dan Silver
 Executive Director
Endangered Habitats League
 Los Angeles, California

Leda Huta
 Executive Director
Endangered Species Coalition
 Washington, DC

Natalynne DeLapp
 Executive Director
EPIC—Environmental Protection Information Center
 Arcata, California

Ruth Brooks
 President
Freedom Center for Wildlife
 Cinnaminson, New Jersey

Judith Rodd
 Director
Friends of Blackwater
 Charleston, West Virginia

Larry Campbell
 Conservation Director
Friends of the Bitterroot
 Hamilton, Montana

Melissa Smith
 Executive Director
Friends of the Wisconsin Wolf and Wildlife
 Madison, Wisconsin

Debra Parsons-Drake
 Senior Director, Animal Response, Care,
 and Sanctuary
The Fund for Animals
 New York, New York

Ali Crumpacker
 Director
The Fund for Animals Wildlife Center
 Ramona, California

David Karopkin
 Founder and Director
GooseWatch NYC
 Brooklyn, New York

John Chronowski
 President
Grand Rapids Audubon Club
 Grand Rapids, Michigan

Melissa Smith
 Executive Director
Great Lakes Wildlife Alliance
 Madison, Wisconsin

Shelley Silbert
Executive Director
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Durango, Colorado

Maureen Hackett, M.D.
President and Founder
Howling for Wolves
Hopkins, Minnesota

Barbara Hodges, DVM, MBA
HSVMA Veterinary Advisor
The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association
Gaithersburg, Maryland

Ben Callison
President
The Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust
Washington, DC

George Wuerthner
Hunters for Predators
Bend, Oregon

Marilyn Kroplick, M.D.
President
In Defense of Animals
San Rafael, California

Carson Barylack
Campaigns Officer
International Fund for Animal Welfare
Washington, DC

Elena Rizzo
President
Into the Wild, Inc.
Saratoga Springs, New York

Laura Jackson
President
Juniata Valley Audubon Society
Tyrone, Pennsylvania

Timothy Coleman
Executive Director
Kettle Range Conservation Group
Republic, Washington

Kimberly Baker
Executive Director
Klamath Forest Alliance
Orleans, California

Mike Peterson
Executive Director
The Lands Council
Spokane, Washington

Marilyn Weaver
Executive Director
League of Humane Voters, Florida
Tarpon Springs, Florida

John Eberhart
Director
League of Humane Voters, Georgia
Atlanta, Georgia

Mark Larson
President
Maricopa Audubon Society
Phoenix, Scottsdale, and Tempe, Arizona

Kurt Schwartz
Conservation Chair
Maryland Ornithological Society
Ellicott City, Maryland

Brett Garling
Director of Communications
Mission Blue
Napa, California

Vanessa Handy Armstrong
Co-Chair
MOMS Advocating Sustainability
Mill Valley, California

Nancy Warren
Executive Director
National Wolfwatcher Coalition
Duluth, Minnesota

Zack Strong
Staff Attorney, Wildlife Conservation Project
Natural Resources Defense Council
Bozeman, Montana

Don Molde
Co-Founder
Nevada Wildlife Alliance
Reno, Nevada

Susan Harvey
President
North Country Watch
Templeton, California

Wally Sykes
Co-Founder
Northeast Oregon Ecosystems
Joseph, Oregon

Donna Osseward
President
Olympic Park Associates
Seattle, Washington

Larry Boersma
Chief Executive Officer
Preserve Our Wildlife
Sarasota, Florida

Camilla Fox
Founder and Chief Executive Officer
Project Coyote
Larkspur, California

Tim Keating
President
Rainforest Relief
Jersey City, New Jersey

Lisa Owens Viani
Director
Raptors are the Solution
Berkeley, California

Michael Kellett
Executive Director
RESTORE: The North Woods
Hallowell, Maine

Lori Andresen
President
Save Our Sky Blue Waters
Duluth, Minnesota

Kerry Kriger, PhD
Executive Director
SAVE THE FROGS!
Los Angeles, California

Ara Marderosian
Executive Director
Sequoia ForestKeeper®
Kernville, California

Dr. Brian L. Horejsi
Wildlife Scientist
Speak Up for Wildlife Foundation
Penticton, British Columbia

Donna Olsen
Founder
Tri-City Ecology Center
Fremont, California

Mike Splain
Executive Director
Ventana Wilderness Alliance
Santa Cruz, California

Bettina Bowers Schwan
Animal Care Director
**Walden's Puddle Wildlife Rehabilitation
and Education Center**
Joelton, Tennessee

Josh Osher
Montana Director
Western Watersheds Project
Hamilton, Montana

Rachel Tilseth
Founder
Wolves of Douglas County Wisconsin
Menomonie, Wisconsin

Bethany Cotton
Wildlife Program Director
WildEarth Guardians
Missoula, Montana

John Carter, PhD
Manager
Yellowstone to Uintas Connection
Paris, Idaho

George Nickas
Executive Director
Wilderness Watch
Missoula, Montana

Linda Dionne
President
Voices of Wildlife in New Hampshire
Manchester, New Hampshire

Greg Costello
Executive Director
Wildlands Network
Seattle, Washington

Sharon Negri
Director
WildFutures
Berkeley, California

Buz Marthaler
Chairman
Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Northern Utah
Ogden, Utah

Lisa Robertson
Board Director
Wyoming Untrapped
Jackson, Wyoming

Diane K. Gallegos
Executive Director
Wolf Haven International
Tenino, Washington

Maggie Howell
Executive Director
The Wolf Conservation Center
South Salem, New York

ⁱ On October 23, 2015, the National Park Service (NPS) finalized a rule amending its regulations for sport hunting and trapping in National Preserves in Alaska. A similar rule by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) was finalized on August 3, 2016 amending their regulations on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska to prohibit cruel killing methods and end so-called “predator control.”

ⁱⁱ <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2016/02/denali-national-parks-text>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/08/09/storied-alaska-wolf-pack-beloved-for-decades-has-vanished-thanks-to-hunting/>

^{iv} http://www.peer.org/assets/docs/ak/8_8_16_NPS_Wolf_impacts.pdf

^v Alaska voters oppose cruel methods of killing wildlife on Alaska’s federal public lands. They oppose baiting and trapping; and oppose denning by more than 2-to-1 margin.

http://www.humanesociety.org/news/press_releases/2016/03/alaska-nwr-cruel-practices-030116.html

^{vi} Emphasis added. NPS’s economics for Alaskan economy: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/vse.htm>

^{vii} <http://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/fhw11-ak.pdf> and <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/vse.htm>