

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

July 17, 2018

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
Office of the Democratic Leader
The Capitol, H-204
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
U.S. House of Representatives
Office of the Majority Leader
The Capitol, H-107
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
U.S. Senate
Office of the Minority Leader
The Capitol, S-221
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate
Office of the Majority Leader
The Capitol, S-230
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

As the House-Senate conference committee finalizes the conference report on the National Defense Authorization Act for 2019, we write to urge you to reject provisions which would have widespread, negative consequences for the conservation of our imperiled wildlife and public lands.

The 2019 Defense Authorization bills contain numerous, controversial, anti-environmental provisions that are unrelated to military readiness. These deceptive provisions would cause irreparable harm to our wildlife and public lands.

Provisions included in the House bill would undermine the science-based decision-making process used to protect all wildlife, plants, and fish in danger of extinction under the Endangered

Species Act (ESA) by prohibiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from listing the greater sage-grouse and the lesser prairie chicken, even if these species are in need of federal protection to avoid extinction, for at least ten years, and immediately and permanently delisting—legislatively—the American burying beetle which is currently protected under the ESA. These are attacks not only on the individual species but on the ESA itself and are out of step with the American public.

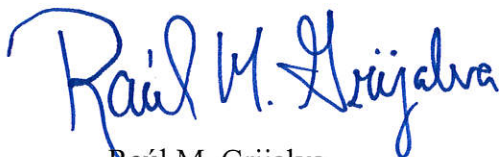
A 2015 national poll found that ninety percent of American voters support this critical law. Decisions about how to protect species under the ESA should be based on science and made by the experts at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, not Congress. The legislation would also prevent members of the public from challenging these decisions in court, undermining a core value of our democracy.

An additional provision would undermine the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and would require the Department of Defense to obtain authorizations from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) every ten years—instead of the current five-year requirement—for activities that can harm marine mammals. Congress included this 5-year authorization requirement in the MMPA to ensure that military activities that can harm marine mammals—most notably the Navy's use of sonar and underwater explosives—do not deplete marine mammal populations. These five-year reviews are important because NMFS works with the military, most often the Department of the Navy, to determine and establish scientifically appropriate mitigation measures based on the most up-to-date science to achieve the "least practicable adverse impact" on the affected species.

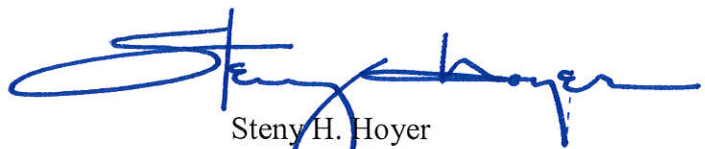
The law requires periodic reviews because marine mammals are difficult to monitor in the wild, the most current research and population counts can change frequently, and impacts from Navy activities can be significant. During its most recent round of environmental reviews, the Navy estimated that over five years it would kill more than 250 whales and other marine mammals, cause permanent injury to another 3,000, and disrupt foraging and other vital behaviors more than 30 million times.

Again, we urge you to stand up for laws that conserve our natural heritage for future generations by removing these attacks on wildlife from the final conference report for the NDAA. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources



Steny H. Hoyer
Democratic Whip



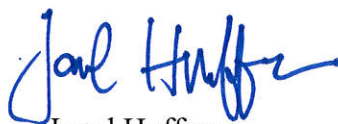
Anthony Brown
Member of Congress



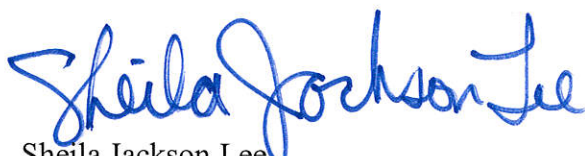
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress



Val Demings
Member of Congress



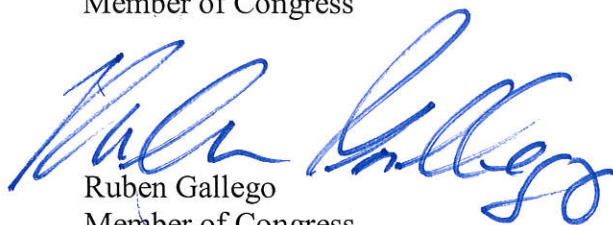
Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress



Ted Lieu
Member of Congress



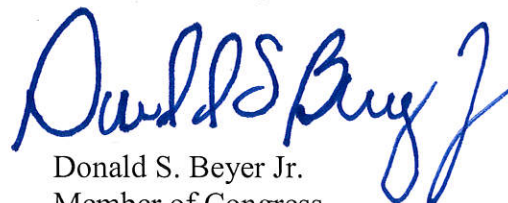
Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



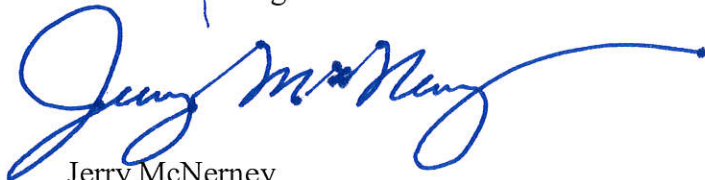
Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress


Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress


Mark Pocan
Member of Congress


Seth Moulton
Member of Congress


Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress


Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress


Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress

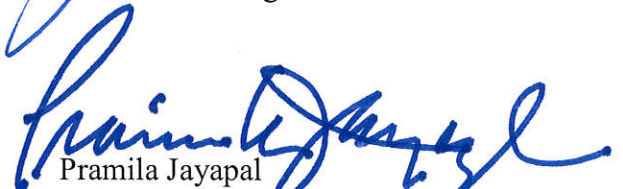

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

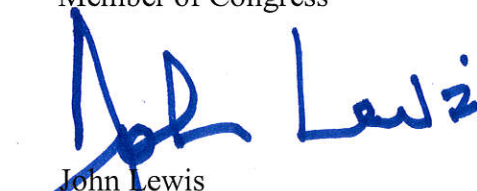

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress


Dina Titus
Member of Congress


Jose E. Serrano
Member of Congress


Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress


Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress


John Lewis
Member of Congress


Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress


Steve Cohen
Member of Congress


Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



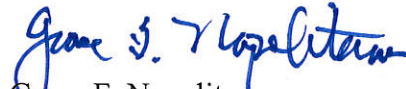
Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



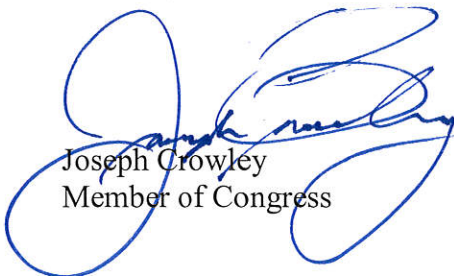
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress



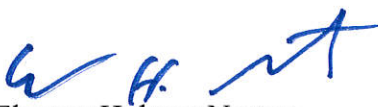
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

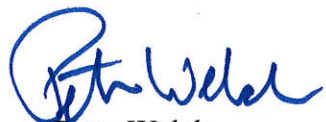


Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress

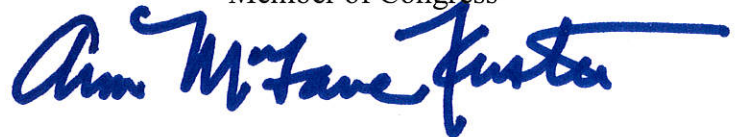

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress


Peter Welch
Member of Congress


Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress


Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress


Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress


Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress


Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress


Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress


Julia Brownley
Member of Congress


Rick Larsen
Member of Congress


Kathy Castor
Member of Congress


Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress


Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

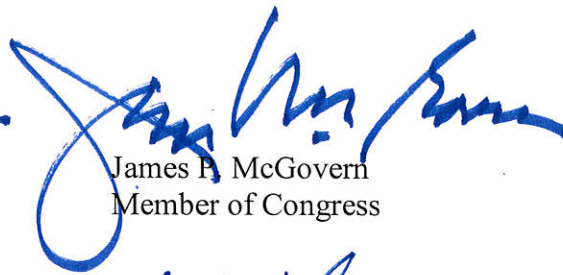

Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress


Ruben J. Kihuen
Member of Congress


Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomer
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Filemon Vela
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress



Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



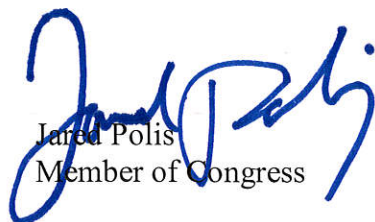
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



John Sarbanes
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



James Himes
Member of Congress



Daniel Lipinski
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



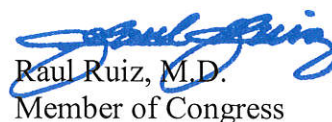
Elizabeth H. Esty
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



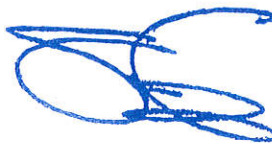
Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



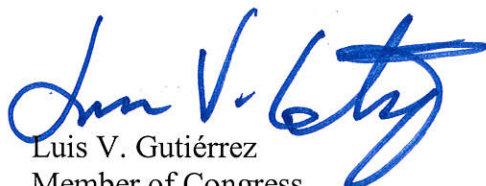
Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Member of Congress



Tony Cardenas
Member of Congress



Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Henry "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sanchez
Member of Congress



John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



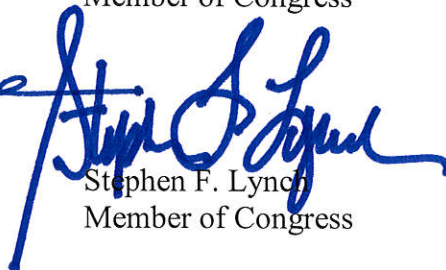
Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



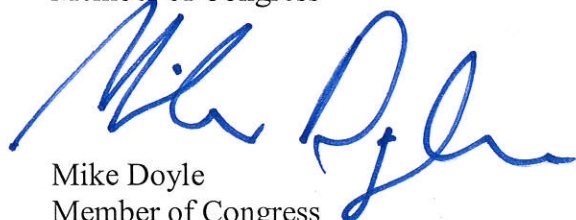
David E. Price
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



Alma S. Adams
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress