

January 28, 2020

The Honorable Michael Bennet
The Honorable Cory Gardner
The Honorable Diana DeGette
The Honorable Joe Neguse
The Honorable Scott Tipton
The Honorable Ken Buck
The Honorable Doug Lamborn
The Honorable Jason Crow
The Honorable Ed Perlmutter
United States Congress
Washington, DC

Dear Senators Bennet and Gardner and Representatives DeGette, Neguse, Tipton, Buck, Lamborn, Crow, and Perlmutter:

As religious leaders we write to you today unified in our support for the protection of God's precious and good creation and in particular the Endangered Species Act. This bedrock piece of conservation law has been extremely effective in preventing species from becoming extinct. Specifically, we urge you to counter measures to weaken the Endangered Species Act and support the Protect America's Wildlife and Fish In Need of Conservation Act (PAW and FIN Conservation Act). This critical legislation would restore vital protections for our nation's most imperiled species by repealing the recent regulations that gravely weaken the Endangered Species Act.

Our Scriptures are filled with messages about taking care of Creation. In those passages, we are reminded that the world belongs to God and we are instructed to be stewards of God's earth. The story of Noah's ark sets forth an example for us to follow as we care for creatures great and small. God's covenant with Noah and his descendants as well as with the entirety of Creation makes it clear that God views Creation, both human and non-human, as valuable and as being in relationship with one another.

The Endangered Species Act is our nation's most effective tool for protecting species threatened with extinction. Given the unprecedented threats to these species, we need a fully funded and actively enforced Act now more than ever. The recent regulatory rollbacks undermine the Endangered Species Act by making it more difficult to extend protections to newly-listed threatened species and allowing economic considerations to factor into decisions about whether a species should be protected under the Act. Further, the

regulations make it easier for companies to advance industrial projects in critical habitat areas that are essential to species' survival and more difficult to protect imperiled species that are most impacted by climate change.

Because of our strong conviction that God entrusted the care of Creation to us, including the most vulnerable species, religious denominations over the years have released policy statements urging that we, as a nation, uphold our duty to steward God's creatures.

The PAW and FIN Conservation Act helps us in our work to protect God's creation and some of God's most vulnerable species. We urge you to support this vital piece of legislation and join us in stewarding God's creation.

Sincerely,

Adrian Miller, Executive Director, Colorado Council of Churches

Rev. Rebecca Kemper Poos, United Church of Christ, Buena Vista

Rev. Peter Sawtell, Eco-Justice Ministries

Rev. Timothy Tyler, Shorter Community AME Church, Denver

Rev. Darwin Little, Spottswood AME Zion Church, Denver

Rev. Kay Blount, Miracle Mountain AME Zion Church, Denver

Rev. Anthony Hill, Cleaves Memorial CME Church, Denver

Rev. Frank Davis, Zion Baptist Church, Denver

Rev. Jules Smith, Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church, Aurora

Rev. Jim Dotson, Trinity Missionary Baptist, Colorado Springs

Rev. Kevin Daniels, Sr., New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist, Fountain