

January 28, 2020

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
The Honorable Tina Smith  
The Honorable Jim Hagedorn  
The Honorable Angie Craig  
The Honorable Dean Phillips  
The Honorable Betty McCollum  
The Honorable Ilhan Omar  
The Honorable Tom Emmer  
The Honorable Collin Peterson  
The Honorable Pete Sauber  
The United States Congress  
Washington, DC

Dear Senators Klobuchar and Smith and Representatives Hagedorn, Craig Phillips, McCollum, Omar, Emmer, Peterson, and Stauber:

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,

Rev. Mark Peters, Duluth

Rev. Peg Chamberlin, Minneapolis

Juliana Nerbonne, Executive Director, Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light

Rev. Dr. David Carlson, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Duluth

Anthony Lanzillo, Loaves & Fishes, Duluth

Rabbi Alexander Davis, Beth El Synagogue, St Louis Park

Rabbi Norman Cohen, Bet Shalom Congregation, Minnetonka

Rabbi Debra Rappaport, Shir Tikvah, Minneapolis

Rabbi Shoshana Dworsky, Associate Chaplain, Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges, Northfield

Presiding Elder/Pastor Stacey Smith, St. James AME , St. Paul

Rev. Jon Robinson, St. Peters AME , Minneapolis

Rev. Richard Coleman, Wayman AME, Minneapolis

Rev. Tracey Gibson, St. James AME, Minneapolis

Rev. Pamela Ngunjiri, St. Mark AME, Duluth

Rev. William Smith, Lily of the Valley AME, Apple Valley

Rev. Rosemary Williams, Anointed Faith Missionary Baptist, St. Paul

Rev. Brian Herron, Zion Baptist, Minneapolis

Bishop John White, AME Church - Fourth Episcopal District