

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2026

Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart
Subcommittee on National Security,
State Department, and Related Programs
House Appropriations Committee
HT-2, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Lois Frankel
Subcommittee on National Security,
State Department, and Related Programs
House Appropriations Committee
1036 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Frankel:

We write in support of continued funding in the FY 2027 National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations bill for programs that support international conservation, combating wildlife trafficking, land use, management, and protection, and global health initiatives. These U.S. investments, which have longstanding bipartisan and bicameral support, contribute to U.S. security and economic interests, combat transnational organized crime, build economic stability among our strategic partners around the world, and halt emerging diseases before they come to our borders. In doing so, they counter malign actors and threats to U.S. interests, protect essential natural resources and the U.S. supply chains on which they rely, and strengthen our relationships and influence in a world of increasing global competition, making America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

The U.S. government recognizes the illegal trade in endangered wildlife products is transnational organized crime that garners up to \$23 billion annually. Accounts combating wildlife trafficking and related transnational crimes keep criminals from profiting from, stealing, and poaching wildlife and other natural resources. The high profits and low risks of wildlife trafficking have attracted the involvement of the same organized syndicates that traffic drugs, guns, and people, and violent extremist groups, including those with ties to terrorism and drug cartels.

Illegal trade in timber, minerals, and seafood is also robbing Americans of billions of dollars annually by depressing prices of these goods, making it harder for law-abiding U.S. businesses and workers to compete in global markets. These illegal activities are driving deforestation and the collapse of global fish stocks, which are not only vital resources for developing communities that heavily rely on them, but for the global markets and supply chains that depend on their stability. As such, federal investments in international conservation combat threats to domestic security and economic prosperity while empowering local communities and building economic stability and sound natural resource management among our strategic partners.

The alarming rate of deforestation and land degradation in the developing world is also creating a host of challenges that warrant U.S. investment to address them. Deforestation and wildlife trade destined for eateries contribute to disease spillover from animals to people and increased risk of future pandemics. To protect Americans from diseases arriving on our shores, zoonotic surveillance and One Health capacity in the developing world is essential, including through U.S. foreign assistance programs listed below.

FY27 NSRP Priority Accounts:

Biodiversity Conservation Programs

Most U.S. foreign assistance for on-the-ground conservation has been delivered through Biodiversity Conservation programs implemented by the State Department International Narcotics Control & Law Enforcement, the Bureau of Oceans & International Environmental & Scientific Affairs, the Regional Bureaus, and historically USAID and technical partner agencies, such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service and the Department of the Interior. These programs support improved natural resource management and help protect some of the largest, most at-risk natural landscapes and seascapes, including tropical forests in the Amazon, Central Africa, and Southeast Asia and transboundary water basins, as well as wildlife populations, water and soil quality, and the livelihoods of millions of people who directly depend on these resources for their survival and economic growth. For FY27, we request \$292.6 million for Biodiversity Conservation programs, including \$42.75 million to the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE). This continued funding should support regional landscape programs in Central Africa, the Amazon, and Central America, and include support to natural resource agencies with technical capacity and partnerships to conserve forests, and endangered species.

Combating Wildlife Trafficking Programs

U.S. agencies led by the State Department are taking strong steps to address the transnational organized crimes of wildlife poaching and trafficking, and its convergence with other transnational organized crimes, including trafficking in humans, guns, drugs, timber, minerals, and fish, as well as smuggling and money laundering. Since FY14, Congress has directed funding to address wildlife poaching and trafficking, including through programs at the State Department Bureau of International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) and the U.S. Agency for International Development. In 2022, Congress reauthorized the bipartisan END Wildlife Trafficking Act to strengthen existing efforts and support implementation of a national strategy to combat wildlife trafficking, including programs to increase the capacity of wildlife law enforcement to detect, interdict, and seize illegal wildlife products, and enhance investigative and law enforcement functions of our foreign enforcement partners, among other goals. Combating Wildlife Trafficking funding supports projects to strengthen anti-poaching and wildlife law enforcement, strengthen judicial systems and rule of law, disrupt trafficking networks, and reduce consumer demand for illegal wildlife products. These programs also complement and support efforts to address other natural resource crimes, including illegal logging and timber trafficking, illegal mining, and Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU)

fishing. For FY27, we request \$95 million for Counter Wildlife Poaching and Trafficking programs, including to address their convergence with other transnational organized natural resource crimes related to timber, minerals, and fish.

Reducing Deforestation and Preventing Illegal Logging

Strategic investments by the State Department through the Bureau of Oceans and Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) and the Bureau of International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) prevent deforestation in developing countries and combat illegal logging and the trade of illegal timber products, playing a vital role in protecting the world's remaining forests and ensuring that law-abiding business operators are not undercut by unfair competition. Preventing illegal logging practices consistent with the Lacey Act Amendments (16 U.S.C. 3371 et seq./section 8204 of Public Law 110–246) combats illicit timber trafficking and related crimes by building law enforcement and compliance capacities in partner nations, disrupts criminal networks and illicit financing mechanisms that threaten U.S. trade and security interests around the world, and supports the improvement of traceability in commodity supply chains and data collection pertaining to illegal logging and deforestation. For FY27, we request no less than \$25 million for reducing deforestation and preventing illegal logging programs.

The Global Environment Facility

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is an independent international financial institution that provides grants to support the sustainable use of natural capital and improved management of natural resources. The GEF also funds programs to combat poaching and wildlife trafficking around the world, including strengthening national laws, improving law enforcement, monitoring wildlife populations, and reducing demand, as well as programs to address both chemical pollution and desertification. GEF awards have been reinvested in U.S. businesses for the purchase of farming equipment. The FY26 Consolidated Appropriations Act included a U.S. contribution to the GEF at \$150.2 million. We request level funding at \$150.2 million in FY27 for the U.S. contribution to the GEF.

Global Health Security Program

The U.S. government, historically through USAID's Global Health Programs, has had a track record of monitoring, predicting, preventing, and responding to emerging infectious diseases, including zoonotic diseases that spillover from wildlife and animals to people. Bio-surveillance, the collection and analysis of zoonotic spillover data of both known and unknown pathogens at the source of spillover, is an essential but often overlooked component of preventing pandemics and other national security threats. For FY27, we request \$615.605 million for bilateral Global Health Security programs.

It is critical that any funding for Global Health Security addresses the risks of zoonotic spillover. We also request the following report language be included in the NSRP report:

Global Health Security.—The Secretary of State is encouraged to prioritize zoonotic spillover prevention at the source, such as wildlife trade chains and degraded edges of the forest, within bilateral funding and multilateral agreements.

Land Use, Management, and Protection

U.S. investments in Land Use, Management and Protection programs at the State Department OES and INCLE, and historically at USAID, support efforts to safeguard terrestrial and marine resources, including to conserve critical forests, prevent deforestation and forest degradation, and counter illegal logging and associated economic impacts to global supply chains. These initiatives in the world's largest forests, which are also richest in wildlife and carbon have helped address rural poverty, good governance, and land tenure while protecting critical upstream water supplies and creating economic opportunities that have raised GDP and, in some cases, effectively prevented out-migration from forest-dependent communities, including in Central America. For FY26, we request \$131.8 million for Land Use, Management, and Protection programs, including strengthening local community-led eco-tourism, forest management efforts, and reliable supply chains for timber and non-timber forest products while protecting law-abiding producers and promoting responsible, locally-led forestry enterprises.

U.S. Foundation for Natural Security & Counterterrorism

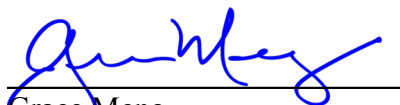
The U.S. government is a leader in international conservation. U.S. investments in international conservation have a track record and reputation of attracting philanthropic and other public and private sector donors. To leverage greater and sustained long-term financing for protected and conserved areas around the world, two years ago Congress passed into law the bipartisan US Foundation for International Conservation Act (P.L. 118-159), creating a new foundation to facilitate public-private partnerships. The FY26 Consolidated Appropriations Act renamed the independent agency to the U.S. Foundation for Natural Security & Counterterrorism. It is now being established by the State Department as an independent foundation. The Foundation's mandate includes matching every \$1 provided by the U.S. government with an additional \$2 from non-U.S. government sources to increase available resources to protect critical landscapes and seascapes in developing countries and prevent illegal exploitation of wildlife, forests, and fisheries by criminal networks, armed groups, and other malign actors. In FY27, we request \$100 million for the US Foundation for Natural Security & Counterterrorism, consistent with previous Appropriations laws.

Tropical Forest & Coral Reef Conservation Act

The Tropical Forest & Coral Reef Conservation Act (TFCCA) offers eligible countries the opportunity to reduce their official concessional debt owed to the U.S. government while generating funds locally to conserve nature and protect ecological integrity while protecting economically vital forest and coral reef ecosystems. Innovative financial mechanisms such as TFCCA have demonstrated strong conservation and strategic economic cooperation between the U.S. and several countries. For FY27, we request \$5 million for TFCCA.

We urge the subcommittee to continue to fund international conservation and combating wildlife trafficking programs as part of U.S. foreign assistance in the FY27 National Security, State Department, and Related Programs Appropriations Act.

Sincerely,



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



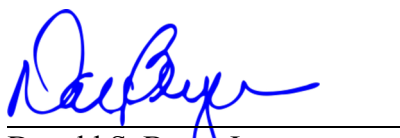
Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



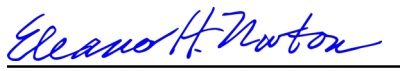
George Leiner
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



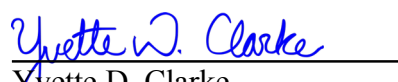
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress



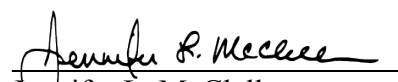
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



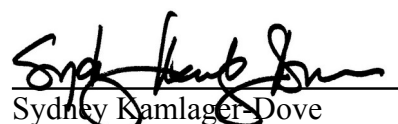
Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



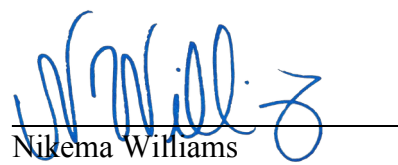
Diana DeGette
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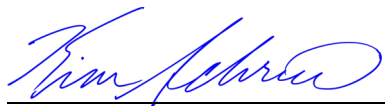
Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
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Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
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Nellie Pou
Member of Congress



Ritchie Torres
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Sarah McBride
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Steve Cohen
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Judy Chu
Member of Congress



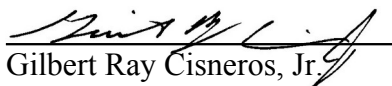
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



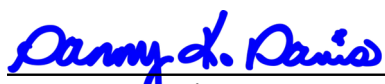
Dina Titus
Member of Congress



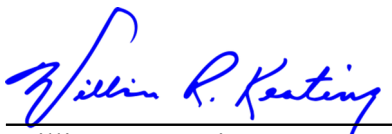
Brendan F. Boyle
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Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
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William R. Keating
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Suhas Subramanyam
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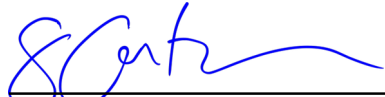
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



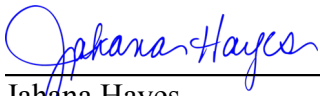
Gwen S. Moore
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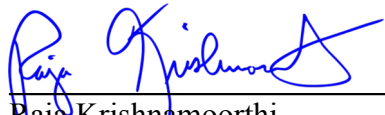
James P. McGovern
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Mark DeSaulnier
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Froy A. Carter, Sr.
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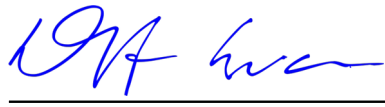
Brad Sherman
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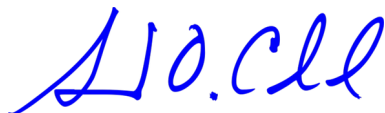
David Scott
Member of Congress



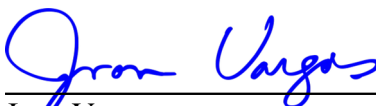
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



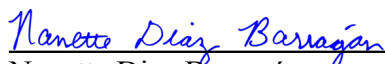
Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



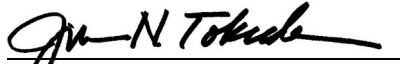
Salud Carbajal
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Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress


Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress

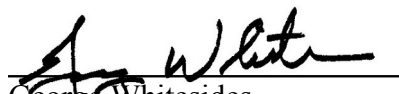

Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress


André Carson
Member of Congress


Julia Brownley
Member of Congress


Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress


Pablo José Hernández
Member of Congress


George Whitesides
Member of Congress


SETH MOULTON
Member of Congress


Lucy McBath
Member of Congress


Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

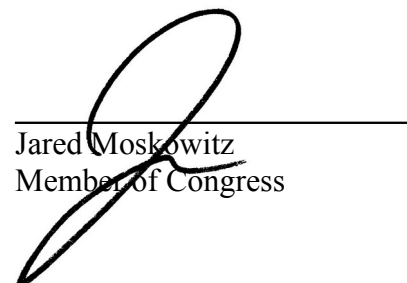

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress


James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress


Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress


Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress


Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress


Jared Moskowitz
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Aumua Amata Coleman
Radewagen
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James C. Moylan
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Luz M. Rivas
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Greg Stanton
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