

April 11, 2008

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rahall:

Our coalition, representing over 10 million members, respectfully requests the Committee on Natural Resources to conduct a full committee mark-up on H.R. 1464, the Great Cats and Rare Canids Act, introduced by Representative Tom Udall and cosponsored by 87 other Members of Congress.

This legislation would assist in the conservation of rare cat and canid populations outside the United States. Through the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, the Act would provide much needed financial resources for more than a dozen species that are recognized as endangered or threatened on the World Conservation Union Red List of Endangered Species. These include the majestic jaguar of South and Central America, the elusive snow leopard, the cheetah, the African wild dog, and other rare predator species. The Act would create a Great Cats and Rare Canids (GCRC) Conservation Fund that would leverage private conservation dollars – by as much as three to one – from corporate and non-government sources. Particularly, the GCRC Fund would address the critical need for conserving global priority species like large carnivores that serve as “keystone” or “umbrella” species for other fauna and flora in their native habitats.

The U.S. Congress has already passed legislation to aid other species covered by the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, such as tigers, rhinos, elephants, great apes, and most recently marine turtles. Since 1990, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has administered the Fund to produce effective and creative solutions to human-animal conflicts, illegal poaching and smuggling and other challenges to survival of these species. We strongly support the passage of the GCRC Act to extend these programs to threatened large carnivores, and to renew Congress’ commitment to conservation of global priority species in key landscapes around the world.

We would greatly appreciate your leadership in calling for a full committee mark-up on H.R. 1464, the Great Cats and Rare Canids Act of 2007.

Sincerely,

Wildlife Conservation Society • World Wildlife Fund • African Wildlife Foundation
Defenders of Wildlife • Association of Zoos and Aquariums • Conservation International
The Nature Conservancy • Wildlife Alliance • Safari Club International
International Fund for Animal Welfare