



March 18, 2021

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
 United States Representative
 2433 Rayburn House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
 United States Representative
 271 Cannon House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
 United States Representative
 1527 Longworth House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Vern Buchanan
 United States Representative
 2110 Rayburn House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Jeffries, Fitzpatrick, Huffman, and Buchanan:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and our millions of supporters across the United States, we are writing to express our support for the Global Amphibians Protection Act (GAPA).

Amphibians have existed on Earth since before the dinosaurs. With more than 8,000 species, they are found almost everywhere on our planet. Although this seems like a large number, most of these creatures live in small, concentrated populations with scarce resources and requiring specific environmental conditions. As a result, an overwhelming number of these amphibians are in desperate need of conservation strategies to avoid extinction in the wild.

Amphibians are an important part of ecosystems around the globe. They serve as predators for disease vectors like mosquitoes, as well as prey for other native wildlife. An interesting feature of amphibians are their ability to breathe through their skin, and this permeable skin makes them particularly vulnerable to environmental disturbances, including disease, pollution, gradual changes to temperature and climate, and other environmental factors. In fact, everywhere on Earth, their populations are decreasing to the point that many of them in the last 40 years have become extinct.

The need for amphibian conservation is even more urgent given the global spread of chytrid fungus, which some scientists have called the most destructive pathogen ever described by science, and which has so far caused the decline of 501 amphibian species. Of the affected species, 90 are now believed to be extinct in the wild, and 124 have declined in number by more than 90 percent.

In 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated the Amphibians in Decline (AID) program at the direction of Congress to help arrest this decline in amphibians. Over the course of 6 years, the program awarded more than \$1 million to over 40 projects in 25 countries, leveraging an additional \$2.6 million in matching funds to help address some of the key problems causing the decline for some species. Regrettably, cuts to the Service's budget forced the program to be suspended. GAPA

would authorize this program, reviving an important source of funding for the global fight to save thousands of the world's most vulnerable species.

We strongly support GAPA and look forward to working with you to secure its passage.

Sincerely,

African Wildlife Foundation

Amphibian Survival Alliance

Animal Welfare Institute

Association of Zoos and Aquariums

Bonobo Conservation Initiative

Born Free USA

Center for Biological Diversity

Cheetah Conservation Fund

Conservation International

Defenders of Wildlife

Environmental Investigation Agency

Global Wildlife Conservation

Humane Society International

Humane Society Legislative Fund

The Humane Society of the United States

International Crane Foundation

International Elephant Foundation

International Fund for Animal Welfare

International Rhino Foundation

Natural Resources Defense Council

Rare Species Fund

Wild Earth Allies

Wildlife Conservation Society

World Wildlife Fund