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June 26, 2017

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative Calvert, Representative McCollum, Senator Murkowski, and Senator Udall:

On behalf of the dozens of organizations and individuals listed below and our millions of members and supporters, we are writing to urge you to support funding at the FY17 enacted level (\$26.4 M) for the Department of the Interior's National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASCs), which are within the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Land Resources account. The President's FY18 budget proposes a 34% decrease in overall funding for this program and would result in elimination of half of the eight regional centers. These cuts would dramatically undermine the ability of the Department of the Interior (DOI) to support federal,

state, tribal, and private sector wildlife and land managers as they seek to sustain the nation's natural resources and reduce risks from climatic and land use changes.

This science-based program was established by Congress during the Bush Administration in response to challenges faced by fish and wildlife managers in maintaining the ecological viability and economic vitality of our natural resources in the face of a changing climate. These challenges have only grown more acute as managers face increasing climate-related threats, such as long-term droughts, massive wildfires, extreme precipitation and flooding events, spreading invasive species, and rising sea levels.

The Climate Adaptation Science Centers respond to these challenges by conducting research on the impacts and risks a changing environment poses to wildlife, fish and other natural resources. CASCs work with managers and decision-makers to help them apply this science in crafting management strategies that are capable of adapting to changing conditions and reducing climate-related risks and vulnerabilities. This is accomplished through the combined efforts of a national center (formerly known as the National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center), housed at USGS, and a network of eight regional centers (previously known as DOI Climate Science Centers), which are partnerships between USGS and leading research universities. These university-based collaborations ensure that the regional centers leverage and are well coordinated with other research and outreach capabilities in the region, as well as leverage significant nonfederal funding.

The National and Regional CASCs provide rigorous, peer-reviewed science and tools to help fish and wildlife managers, federal and state land management agencies, tribal and indigenous communities, and others to develop and execute climate-resilient management strategies. The centers focus on delivering sound and actionable science that address priority stakeholder needs, including:

- Helping Department of the Interior and other resource managers protect and sustain our nation's fish and wildlife, public lands, and water resources;
- Assisting state fish and wildlife agencies in assessing climate risks to their species and habitats, and identifying priority conservation and management actions;
- Aiding tribes and indigenous communities to help them understand, prepare for, and adapt to climate risks to tribal lands and resources; and
- Educating and training the next generation of climate adaptation scientists, and building capacity in the broader resource management community for the appropriate application of climate science.

The most recent National Climate Assessment documents that climate-related disasters and economic disruptions are on the rise, affecting every region and impacting communities across the country. Ensuring the vitality of the nation's \$877 billion outdoor economy, which provides more than 7.8 million jobs, will rely on our capacity to prepare and appropriately manage for increasing climate-related risks and impacts. The ability of federal, state, tribal, and private managers and decision-makers to successfully minimize the economic and ecological risks of a

changing climate depends on the continued availability of the sound and rigorous climate adaptation science that the National and Regional CASCs provide.

Given the critical importance of these programs for ensuring the health of the nation's fish and wildlife resources, for promoting responsible and forward-looking stewardship of public and private lands, and for ensuring the continued vitality of the nation's outdoor economy, we urge you to provide FY18 funding comparable to the FY17 enacted levels (\$26.4 M) for the Department of the Interior's National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers.

Sincerely,

National Wildlife Federation

Bruce A. Stein, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President, Conservation
Science & Climate Adaptation
202-797-6602, steinb@nwf.org

The Wildlife Society

Bruce Thompson, Ph.D., CWB®
President
301-870-9770 x308, cmurphy@wildlife.org

Defenders of Wildlife

Mark Salvo
Vice President for Landscape Conservation
202-772-0229, msalvo@defenders.org

Union of Concerned Scientists

Peter Frumhoff, Ph.D.
Director of Science and Policy
617-301-8035, pfrumhoff@ucsusa.org

Adaptation International

Sascha Petersen
Founder

American Fisheries Society

Joe Margraff, Ph.D.
President

American Ornithological Society

Steven R. Beissinger, Ph.D.
President

American Society of Civil Engineers

Brian Pallasch
Managing Director of Government
Relations & Infrastructure Initiatives

Archbold Biological Station

Eric Menges, Ph.D.
Program Director

Arkansas Wildlife Federation

Ellen McNulty
President

Audubon Society of New Hampshire

Douglas Bechtel
President

**Center for Climate Adaptation Science
and Solutions (University of Arizona)**

Katharine Jacobs, Ph.D.
Director

**Center for Large Landscape
Conservation**

Gary M. Tabor MES VMD
Executive Director

Colorado Natural Heritage Program

David G. Anderson, Ph.D.
Director & Chief Scientist

Conservation Federation of Missouri

Brandon Butler
Executive Director

Conservation Northwest

Dave Wernitz
Science and Conservation Director

Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

John W. Fitzpatrick, Ph.D.
Executive Director

EcoAdapt

Lara Hansen, Ph.D.
President & Chief Scientist

Ecological Society of America

David M. Lodge, Ph.D.
President

Geos Institute

Tonya Graham
Executive Director

Ho'okele Strategies LLC

Neil J. Hannahs
Founder & CEO

Kunak Wildlife Studies

Alex Krevitz
Biologist

Louisiana Wildlife Federation

Bob Stewart Ph.D.
President

Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society

Laura Berube
Secretary/Treasurer

Michigan Technological University

Nancy H. F. French, Ph.D.
Senior Scientist, Michigan Tech Research
Institute

**Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife
Society**

Laurie Fairchild
President

Montana Wildlife Federation

Dave Chadwick
Executive Director

**National Council for Science and the
Environment**

Michelle Wyman
Executive Director

National Parks Conservation Association

Mark Wenzler
Senior Vice President, Conservation
Programs

National Recreation and Park Association

Kevin O' Hara
Vice President for Urban and Government
Affairs

Open Space Institute

Christopher J. Elliman
President & CEO

Oregon Freshwater Simulations

David R. Conklin, Ph.D.
Principal

Otter Ridge Consulting

Laura Farrell, Ph.D.
Wildlife Biologist

PennFuture

Jacqui Bonomo
Executive Vice President & COO

San Francisco Public Utilities**Commission**

David Behar
Climate Program Director

Seeds of Sustainability

Jim Corven, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor, Bristol Community
College

**Society for Conservation Biology North
America**

Jessa Madosky, Ph.D.
President

Susanne Moser Research & Consulting

Susanne C. Moser, Ph.D.
Director

The Conservation Planning Institute

Ken Vance-Borland
Executive Director

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust

Linda M. Garrett
Executive Director

Vermont Natural Resources Council

Jamey Fidel
General Counsel/Forest and Wildlife
Program Director

Virginia Conservation Network

Mary Rafferty
Executive Director

West Virginia Rivers Coalition

Angie Rosser
Executive Director

Wildlands Network

Greg Costello
Executive Director

Wildlife Conservation Society

Molly Cross, Ph.D.
Climate Adaptation Coordinator for North
America

World Wildlife Fund

Lou Leonard
Senior Vice President, Climate Change and
Energy

In addition to the above organizations, the following individual scientists have signed onto this letter in support of the National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers.

Karen F. Beazley, Ph.D.

Professor, School for Resource and
Environmental Studies
Dalhousie University

Paul Beier, Ph.D.

Regents Professor of Conservation Biology,
School of Forestry
Northern Arizona University

James L. Buizer, Ph.D.

Professor, School of Natural Resources and
the Environment
University of Arizona

Michael Dombeck, Ph.D.

Chief Emeritus, USDA Forest Service

Paul Ferraro, Ph.D.

Bloomberg Distinguished Professor
Johns Hopkins University

Mark Jordan, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Department of Biology
Seattle University

Thomas Lovejoy, Ph.D.

University Professor of Environmental
Science and Policy
George Mason University

John Mull, Ph.D.

Professor of Zoology
Weber State University

Edward O. Wilson, Ph.D.

University Research Professor Emeritus
Harvard University