

January 27, 2009

Dear President Obama,

At this important and exciting time of political and policy transition, we would like to commend to your consideration and early response the challenge and recommendations highlighted in *Beyond Cutting Emissions: Protecting Wildlife and Ecosystems in a Warming World*, a new report by Defenders of Wildlife. We hope that an early priority of your Administration will be to work with Congress to address the pressing need to make wildlife and natural resources more resilient to global warming and help address the associated impacts of ocean acidification.

Human-induced global warming is already upon us. It is profoundly impacting the wildlife and natural resources our society depends upon for survival. Serious damage and disruption is now occurring to ecosystems and wildlife populations, ranging from melting of polar ice caps to increased drought and warming of rivers, lakes, and streams. Wildlife, natural resources and humans are threatened as the basic life-sustaining services provided by ecosystems, such as purifying air and water and pollinating crops, are compromised. This damage has significant economic implications. For example, the outdoor recreation industry, including fishing, hunting, wildlife watching, hiking and other outdoor pursuits that rely heavily on healthy wildlife populations, forests, rivers and ecosystems contribute \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy, support nearly 6.5 million jobs and generate \$88 billion in state and national tax revenue.

Beyond Cutting Emissions summarizes compelling scientific evidence that, while essential, reducing greenhouse gas emissions is not sufficient to sustain our terrestrial, freshwater, and marine wildlife and our natural legacy threatened by global warming. The report explains why the nation must also take immediate action to lessen the impacts of the warming we have already set underway. A new conservation paradigm – one that has ecosystem resiliency at its core – is necessary if wildlife, natural resources and, ultimately, people are to survive the changes wrought by a warming world. Success will require a stronger scientific foundation to inform sound management decisions for our nation's wildlife, lands, and waters.

This report concludes with sound policy recommendations for formulating a comprehensive national response:

- Clear federal policy direction to make addressing global warming's impacts a top priority of federal, state, and tribal natural resource agencies;
- A coordinated national strategy for addressing this complex and cross-cutting challenge;
- Enhanced scientific capacity to build the foundation of knowledge about core ecosystem processes necessary to guide effective management actions; and
- Significant and sustained dedicated federal funding to implement the conservation measures necessary to ensure fish, wildlife, and natural ecosystems survive the many unavoidable impacts of global warming, which should be achieved by dedicating a portion of the revenues from a climate cap-and-trade system.

The climate change impacts due to global warming represent the greatest conservation challenge of our time. Our nation must take early action to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions driving global warming and deal with the consequences of warming and ocean acidification that are already impacting our wildlife, natural resources and, ultimately, our well-being. We urge you, and your Administration to work with Congress to address the serious policy issues highlighted in *Beyond Cutting Emissions*.

Sincerely,

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