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1ST SESSION

H. RES. 69

Expressing the need for the Federal Government to establish a national biodiversity strategy for protecting biodiversity for current and future generations.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 28, 2021

Mr. NEGUSE (for himself, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Mr. HUFFMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

RESOLUTION

Expressing the need for the Federal Government to establish a national biodiversity strategy for protecting biodiversity for current and future generations.

Whereas the planet is facing an unprecedented biodiversity crisis, largely driven by human activity;

Whereas recent scientific studies have confirmed human-driven activities are significantly damaging the Earth's ecosystems by—

- (1) altering 75 percent of the area of terrestrial environments and 66 percent of marine environments;
- (2) directly exploiting wildlife and plant species;
- (3) accelerating climate change, directly harming nature and exacerbating other threats;
- (4) polluting air, land, and water; and

(5) introducing invasive species;

Whereas these studies have shown that human-driven threats have harmed biodiversity by—

(1) threatening approximately one million species with extinction now and in the coming decades, including—

(A) over 40 percent of amphibians;

(B) 33 percent of corals, sharks, shark relatives, and marine mammals;

(C) over 60 percent of cycads and over 30 percent of conifer trees; and

(D) about 10 percent of over 5 million insect species; and

(2) causing population sizes of wild species to decline by—

(A) an average of 68 percent for mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, and reptiles;

(B) nearly 3 billion birds in North America since 1970;

(C) about 50 percent for live corals; and

(D) an average of over 20 percent overall;

Whereas human activity is accelerating the decline of important economic and cultural services, with—

(1) the productivity of nearly one-fourth of the land surface reduced;

(2) over one-third of land surface and 75 percent of freshwater resources devoted to crop or livestock production;

(3) about half a trillion dollars of global crops at risk from pollinator loss;

(4) one-third of marine fisheries overfished, 60 percent fished at capacity, and just 7 percent fished below capacity; and

(5) 25 percent of greenhouse gas emissions caused by land clearing, crops, and fertilization;

Whereas the decline of biodiversity disproportionately impacts indigenous and other communities that rely on nature for essential services, including Native Americans and Alaska Natives who offer unique perspectives and traditional ecological knowledge critical to preserving biodiversity;

Whereas the decline of biodiversity and ecosystem services observed worldwide is occurring in the United States;

Whereas the United States possesses an abundance and great diversity of species of fish, wildlife, and plants that are of significant value to the United States for intrinsic, aesthetic, ecological, educational, cultural, recreational, economic, and scientific reasons;

Whereas the decline of biodiversity presents a direct threat to the security, health, and well-being of the people of the United States by causing economic harm through the loss of valuable ecosystem services such as zoonotic disease buffering, pollination, water filtration, soil replenishment, the provision of game species, medicinal products, recreational opportunities, and others;

Whereas communities of color, low-income communities, Tribal communities, and other populations that have been systematically and deliberately targeted for siting environmentally degrading activities, and excluded from conservation efforts, face disproportionate impacts from biodiversity loss;

Whereas Federal agencies are tasked with protecting and conserving biodiversity in the United States and worldwide through a variety of legal and policy channels;

Whereas there is no coordinating policy to maximize the effectiveness of the Federal Government's conservation efforts and collaboration with the States, local governments, Tribes, private landowners, and other nongovernmental stakeholders;

Whereas the United States should play a leading role on the international stage in addressing the biodiversity crisis, yet the United States—

(1) is not a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species, and other relevant international agreements;

(2) does not issue a national biodiversity outlook, contrary to most other countries; and

(3) does not have a national biodiversity strategy as part of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; and

Whereas scientific research highlights essential pathways forward, including—

(1) establishing the effective conservation, restoration, and durable protection of at least 30 percent of an ecologically representative area of the Nation's and the world's lands, freshwaters, and oceans by 2030 by working collaboratively with governments, land owners, fishers, indigenous peoples, communities, and others;

(2) restoring or rewilding species, degraded habitats, and ensuring integrity and connectivity of protected areas;

(3) retaining and protecting highly intact ecosystems;

(4) reducing pesticide use to levels no higher than needed for sustainable, ecologically, and safe food production; and

(5) addressing the threats posed by invasive species:
Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives that—

3 (1) it is in the national interest for the Federal
4 Government to establish a national biodiversity
5 strategy to—

6 (A) ensure the conservation and restora-
7 tion of the Nation’s biodiversity;

8 (B) secure and restore the ecosystem serv-
9 ices provided by nature for current and future
10 generations;

11 (C) deliver on the United Nations Sustain-
12 able Development Goals;

13 (D) set ambitious yet necessary goals for
14 protecting biodiversity in the coming decades;

15 (E) promote social equity and justice in
16 the conservation of the Nation’s biodiversity;

17 (F) coordinate the actions of Federal agen-
18 cies to advance the conservation of biodiversity;

19 (G) promote collaboration among the Fed-
20 eral, State, and Tribal governments, nongovern-

1 mental stakeholders, civil society, and inter-
2 national cooperation to advance conservation;

3 (H) honor the Federal trust obligations to
4 Tribal nations and Native Americans; and

5 (I) provide global leadership in addressing
6 the biodiversity crisis; and

7 (2) the national biodiversity strategy should in-
8 clude direction on—

9 (A) setting a national goal of conserving at
10 least 30 percent of United States lands and
11 waters to protect biodiversity and address cli-
12 mate change by 2030, supporting international
13 efforts to achieve the same goal on a global
14 scale, and setting other goals necessary to re-
15 duce the threats to biodiversity as indicated by
16 the best available scientific information;

17 (B) taking action to protect threatened,
18 endangered, and at-risk species from further
19 imperilment or extinction;

20 (C) climate adaptation and mitigation
21 strategies for biodiversity conservation, includ-
22 ing—

23 (i) joining and leading international
24 agreements to combat climate change, in-
25 cluding the Paris Agreement;

1 (ii) establishing climate refugia and
2 climate corridors for conservation of spe-
3 cies affected by climate change; and

4 (iii) the rapid build-out of renewable
5 energy;

6 (D) reviewing existing laws, plans, pro-
7 grams, and strategies that are relevant to ad-
8 dressing threats to biodiversity to assess how
9 they can contribute to the objectives of this res-
10 olution and, as found necessary, to recommend
11 new laws, plans, programs, and strategies;

12 (E) ensuring integration of biodiversity
13 protection across the activities of the Federal
14 Government, including foreign policy and for-
15 eign assistance;

16 (F) advancing conservation in collaboration
17 with the State and Tribal governments and on
18 private lands through incentives, funding, tech-
19 nical support, and partnerships;

20 (G) incorporating indigenous knowledge
21 and practices to support conservation and bio-
22 diversity, safeguarding the rights and needs of
23 indigenous peoples, and ensuring fulfillment of
24 the Federal trust obligations that apply to gov-

ernment decisionmaking that impacts the interests of Native Americans;

(H) means to ensure equitable access to nature, inclusive decisionmaking on biodiversity protection, and just allocations of resources to achieve the goals of this resolution, including for systematically and deliberately targeted populations such as communities of color, low-income communities, and Native American communities;

(I) establishing regular monitoring and reporting on the status of biodiversity, in the Nation and globally, including a quadrennial assessment reported to Congress and the American people;

(J) prioritizing programs to identify knowledge gaps and accelerate research and development of new conservation solutions across sectors;

(K) assessing and integrating the United States role in international biodiversity, ecosystem services, and nature conservation in national security and foreign policy strategies, including in international development policies, planning and finance, diplomatic dialogues, and

1 trade agreements, and advancing global adop-
2 tion of and progress towards the “30x30” goal;
3 and

4 (L) funding existing conservation pro-
5 grams, developing new funding sources, and re-
6 ducing subsidies that harm biodiversity, in
7 amounts commensurate with the scale of the
8 challenge.

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