

# STOP EXTINCTION CHALLENGE 2019

## Introductions

Introduce yourself and your team.

## Background

The IPBES biodiversity report brought together more than 400 scientists and experts, 15,000 scientific and government sources, as well as indigenous and local knowledge and found that one Million species are at risk of extinction over the next few decades. This extinction crisis will cause economic and public health harm to Americans, and it is our moral obligation to act.

We are here today, along with thousands of other concerned citizens who are meeting with their Senate offices across the country today, because in the face of this extinction crisis, the Trump Administration is gutting the most important law to prevent this extinction crisis and species disappearing forever.

## Make it personal

- *Activists tell personal stories of a state based threatened/endangered species, examples include:*
  - Contributes to public health (mosquito eaters like bats and birds etc.)
  - Contributes to food security or the economy (tourism, agriculture, pollinators, etc)
  - Contributes to ecosystem health (keystone species like coral, salmon, alligators, predators)
  - Contribute to quality of life (species the state is proud of like manatees, tortoise, jaguars, etc. or that the activist loves for the sake of love)

## Pause

“We would like to pause here and first, we would like to hear about the Senators plans to prevent this crisis and we have some suggestions as well.”

- *Pause to see if staffer has anything to say or good suggestions. Take notes.*

## Key Points

### **1. Defend the Endangered Species Act.**

The Endangered Species Act works because it has prevented 99% of listed species from going extinct. It is popular, with 90% of Americans supporting the Act. Unfortunately, the

Trump Administration has proposed rules that will exacerbate the extinction crisis by weakening the ESA. (which may be published any day.)

The sweeping changes include proposals that would:

- wrongly inject economics into what should be purely science-based decisions about listing imperiled species;
- create loopholes through which the agency can let controversial species go extinct by refusing to designate the full and necessary range of critical habitat due to “societal conflict” and other non-scientific considerations;
- deprive threatened species from automatically receiving protections from killing, trapping and other forms of harm and commercial exploitation;
- ignore the impacts of climate change on species’ habitat; and further imperil endangered species by blinding federal agencies to the broad consequences of their actions.

**ASK:** *Will support or congressional efforts to block or overturn these regulations? Will your boss make a public statement, write an Op Ed or press release opposing the regulations when they are published?*

## **2. Increase Endangered Species Act funding**

The House passed an appropriations bill that is clean of anti-ESA riders and provides funding increases for Department of Interior ESA programs.

**ASK:** *Will the Senator sign a letter, that expresses support for the House passed appropriations and fight for full funding and a clean bill as the Senate works on their spending bills for 2020?*

## **3. Save Wildlife locally**

Wildlife Corridors are an easy way to prevent needless wildlife deaths that also put people at risk.

**ASK:** *Will the Senator cosponsor the S 1499, Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act? Help ensure it is included in any transportation infrastructure bill that moves? **OR** (If a cosponsor already) Thank you for sponsoring the Wildlife Corridors and Conservation Act! will you help to approach other potential co-sponsor and support moving this legislation forward?*

## **4. State specific ask**

Some states may have specific asks that are particularly relevant for their senators. Check-in with your meeting team lead to determine whether your state has a specific ask you should convey in meetings.

## **Follow up**

- Listen carefully and take notes on the Senator or staffer's response
- Thank the Senator or staffer for their time and hand over the leave behind materials including your card/contact information. This is good relationship building.
- Take pictures of your team with your Senator and share on social media #StopExtinction
- Quick tweet example - ATTACH YOUR GROUP PICTURE - "It was great to meet with Senator X staff to discuss the importance of the Endangered Species Act and how to stop the extinction crisis! @endangered @Senator twitter handle #stopextinction
- Send a follow up email after the meeting
- Submit a report back form on how your meeting went, include any pictures.