

November 17, 2014

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Chair, House Democratic Policy and Steering Committee
235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Democratic Leader Pelosi,

The undersigned organizations and the millions of members they represent offer our strong support for Rep. Raúl Grijalva to be the next Ranking Member of the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Rep. Grijalva has shown exemplary leadership throughout his career fighting to protect our common environmental heritage, both in his district and across our nation. This leadership will be needed in the 114th Congress as Republicans in both the House and Senate will almost certainly escalate their attacks on our core environmental laws, including the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act and National Environmental Policy Act.

For the past four years, House Republicans have led an all-out attack on the nation's bedrock environmental laws. The Natural Resources Committee needs a strong voice to oppose these attacks, and one that represents the diversity and strength of the Democratic Party. Rep. Grijalva has the conviction and experience to ensure our nation's irreplaceable natural resources – from endangered species to public lands – are managed sustainably for the benefit of all Americans for generations to come.

A longtime supporter of conservation, Rep. Grijalva has been recognized by members of the House as a champion of core Democratic Party issues critically important to Latino, Native American, Western and progressive communities. When fighting for these cornerstone Democratic Party causes, Rep. Grijalva is known for his fair and open leadership that has earned respect within the committee on both sides of the aisle. We believe Rep. Grijalva will bring to the position of Ranking Member the positive and collaborative approach needed to find solutions to these critical environmental issues.

Rep. Grijalva was pursuing active oversight of offshore drilling long before 2010's disastrous BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. He has spent his career successfully fighting Republican attempts to weaken the Endangered Species Act and other environmental laws. Rep. Grijalva led the successful push to protect the Grand Canyon from future uranium mining claims, and has been a strong defender of wilderness areas, national monuments and our public lands.

With jurisdiction over roughly one-fifth of U.S. lands and almost all of its ocean territory, the Natural Resources Committee plays a singularly important role in overseeing the health of our national forests, wildlife refuges and national parks. The actions of the committee determine whether our public lands will continue to provide clean drinking water to millions of Americans and whether endangered species will retain strong protections. The committee has jurisdiction over energy production, including critical decisions such as whether to drill in the Arctic National

Wildlife Refuge and other environmentally sensitive areas. Just as important, the committee is responsible for ensuring that the U.S. meets its federal trust obligations to Native Americans, including the 565 federally recognized tribes and Alaska Native Corporations. Rep. Grijalva has been a champion of Native American sovereignty rights and the protection of sacred sites, and has proposed legislation to strengthen U.S.-tribal consultation processes through H.R. 1600, the Requirements, Expectations, and Standard Procedures for Executive Consultation with Tribes Act (the RESPECT Act).

The Republican Party has pursued a single-minded agenda to recklessly expand oil drilling while weakening environmental safeguards; to eliminate the public's right to comment on federal land management; and to minimize environmental review for virtually all resource extraction activities. They have relentlessly pursued legislation that would give away, sell or privatize America's publicly owned lands solely to allow the irresponsible extraction of resources at the expense of clean water, recreation and wildlife.

We believe that Rep. Grijalva has the experience and passion to represent the core environmental and human rights values of the Democratic Party, and the conviction to stand up to the radically anti-environmental House Republican agenda as the next ranking member of the Committee.

Sincerely,

Center for Biological Diversity

Cascadia Wildlands
DC Environmental Network
Friends of the Earth
Hispanic Federation
Oceana
Progressive Change Campaign Committee
Progressive Democrats of America
Save America's Forests