

June 12, 2015

Hon. Sally Jewell  
Secretary of the Interior  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

Re: Wildlife Trafficking – Public/Private Partnership

Dear Secretary Jewell:

Thank you for your leadership in working to address the scourge of illegal wildlife trafficking, which has reached crisis levels. With your encouragement and support, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) has taken steps to tighten up the existing ban on the sale of ivory and other illegal wildlife parts in the U.S., and FWS's enforcement unit has been cracking down on illegal trafficking activities in the U.S., with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Despite these efforts, much of the American public remains largely unaware of the seriousness of the wildlife trafficking crisis and the very real threat that it poses to the continued existence of some of the world's most iconic species, including elephants, rhinos, big cats, and other species. Americans do not realize that the U.S. is an important market for illegal traffickers, and a transshipment and money laundering hub for illegally trafficked animal parts. They also have little understanding of the national security threat posed by the criminal trafficking syndicates that are working with terrorist organizations, corrupting governments, and undermining the rule of law around the world.

The President's Task Force that you co-chair released the "National Strategy to Combat Wildlife Trafficking" in February 11, 2014, which acknowledged these key findings. It committed the U.S. government to work with "public and private partners to communicate the hard truths" about the negative impacts of wildlife trafficking and to obtain "the assistance of those with expertise and experience in developing, implementing, evaluating, and refining effective public communications and educational tools."

In a similar vein, the National Strategy stressed the importance of "Building Partnerships to Reduce Domestic Demand," including "team[ing] with" companies in sectors that illegal traffickers may be attempting to penetrate (e.g., retailers, transportation, tourism sector, internet companies) and "build[ing] partnerships with the private sector to share and implement best

practices that will support sustainable supply chains and avoid contributions to illegal wildlife trade.”

In our discussions on this topic, you have expressed a strong interest in working in a public/private partnership that would implement the goals of communicating the hard truths about wildlife trafficking and reducing demand in the U.S., as laid out in the National Strategy. Toward that end, you encouraged the formation of a coalition of leaders from the corporate, media, and non-profit sectors that would enable you to partner effectively with the conservation organizations that already are engaged in this issue, while also enlisting and unleashing the creative involvement of our nation’s business and media sectors in the cause.

I have been working with Judith McHale and a number of leaders over the past several weeks to put together a temporary coalition to serve this purpose. We are calling it the “U.S. Wildlife Trafficking Alliance.” We have obtained expressions of support for the effort from major U.S. conservation organizations and, with your help, we have begun to reach out to businesses and media interests that are concerned about illegal trafficking activity.

We see the Alliance as a way to put a spotlight on the important anti-trafficking work underway in the U.S. across the government, the NGO community, and in the media and business sectors. The goal is to create a broader movement that raises awareness of the crisis, stigmatizes trade in illegal wildlife parts, and demonstrates unified U.S. leadership in closing down illegal wildlife trade. While we strongly support anti-trafficking efforts in Africa and demand reduction efforts in Asia and other markets -- and are particularly appreciative of the outstanding international work that the State Department is leading -- our credibility and success in pushing others to end illegal wildlife trade depends, in the first instance, on what we do here at home.

Please let us know if the U.S. Wildlife Trafficking Alliance is the type of coalition effort that you would like to join with, as a partner, to end illegal wildlife trafficking in the U.S. We can combine forces and gear up a significant effort here in the U.S. in the coming months.

Thank you again for your leadership on this important issue, and I look forward to your response to this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Hayes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David J. Hayes