

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 598

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the need for the United States to lead renewed international efforts to assist developing nations in conserving natural resources and preventing the impending extinction of a large portion of the world's plant and animal species.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 24 (legislative day, JUNE 23), 2008

Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. KERRY, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. BAYH, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. FEINGOLD) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the need for the United States to lead renewed international efforts to assist developing nations in conserving natural resources and preventing the impending extinction of a large portion of the world's plant and animal species.

Whereas scientists estimate that approximately $\frac{1}{10}$ of the world's known biological diversity is currently in danger of extinction, including at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of all mammals, $\frac{1}{3}$ of all primates, $\frac{1}{3}$ of all amphibians, and $\frac{1}{8}$ of all birds;

Whereas scientists have concluded that the initial stages of a major worldwide extinction event are occurring now and have estimated that by the end of the 21st century

as much as $\frac{2}{3}$ of the world's plant and animal species could be in danger of extinction;

Whereas scientists estimate that approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the world's terrestrial plant and animal species reside in whole or in part in developing nations, where in many cases poor management of natural resources has exacerbated the threat of extinction to many species and directly harmed local communities;

Whereas, in addition to producing 20 percent of the world's carbon emissions, unsustainable forestry practices and illegal logging operations have led to the destruction of vast areas of forested land around the world, which, in turn, has led to species loss, increased flooding, erosion, insect infestations, and higher incidences of malaria and other infectious diseases;

Whereas the degradation of the marine environment and unsustainable fishing practices in many parts of the world have led to dramatic declines of many fish and other marine species;

Whereas the introduction of invasive species threatens natural habitats;

Whereas scientists have concluded that many species could face an increased risk of extinction from global climate change;

Whereas sound natural resource management and the conservation of species and habitats are vital to alleviating poverty for many communities in developing countries that depend on these resources for their livelihoods, food, medicinal compounds, housing material, and other necessities;

Whereas there are significant risks to the global and national economies from the destruction of natural resources around the world and the valuable services they provide, such as water and air purification, soil fertility and erosion control, flood and drought mitigation, protection from storm surges, and the sequestration of carbon;

Whereas human encroachment into natural ecosystems increases opportunities for the emergence and transmission of new animal-borne diseases that could cause high levels of human mortality and affect major global industries including travel, trade, tourism, food production, and finance;

Whereas loss of species can jeopardize important future pharmaceutical discoveries, given that more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of all medicinal drugs possess active ingredients from wild species and that at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the most prescribed medicines in the United States are derived from natural compounds;

Whereas natural pollinators and the opportunities of wild and domesticated crossbreeding are vital to world and United States agriculture;

Whereas poverty aggravated by natural resource degradation contributes to political instability, ethnic and sectarian conflict, and the social conditions that can fuel increased violence and terrorism;

Whereas the extinction of plant and animal species raises profound ethical questions, and many religious traditions call upon human beings to act as good stewards of the Earth;

Whereas opportunities for sustainably managing natural resources and conserving viable populations of species and their habitats rapidly diminish every year;

Whereas a substantial body of academic and field research has identified global strategies and market based approaches for better managing natural resources and protecting biological diversity;

Whereas strategic large-scale and site-specific habitat conservation could help to buffer the impacts of climate change on endangered species and human communities;

Whereas an effective international conservation effort that ensures the use of natural resources on a sustainable basis and prevents the worst predicted extinction scenarios from unfolding will require commitment and action from all nations; and

Whereas the United States traditional role in confronting international challenges, protecting the environment, expanding opportunities for people, and articulating a moral vision for global action gives the Nation the opportunity to lead an international conservation effort: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

2 (1) the Government should make full use of
3 Federal laws, regulations and policies, diplomatic
4 agreements, and other appropriate mechanisms to—

5 (A) identify global conservation goals that
6 help ensure the sustainable use of natural re-
7 sources and protect biological diversity in ter-
8 restrial and marine environments of developing
9 countries;

10 (B) focus international conservation efforts
11 on natural areas that are important biodiversity

1 conservation priorities and for which there is a
2 good likelihood of success;

3 (C) raise the international profile of the
4 debate by putting the issue of rapidly declining
5 global biodiversity and poor natural resource
6 management on the agenda of major inter-
7 national decision-making bodies;

8 (D) work with other donor nations to in-
9 crease funding and other support for global
10 conservation strategies that focus on achieving
11 each of the goals identified in subparagraphs
12 (A) through (C); and

13 (E) achieve meaningful progress in the
14 next 5 years toward the goals identified in sub-
15 paragraphs (A) through (C);

16 (2) the United States should use diplomatic
17 mechanisms, relevant international institutions and
18 agreements, and other appropriate mechanisms to
19 lead other nations toward the goals and actions iden-
20 tified in paragraph (1); and

21 (3) the efforts of Federal agencies should re-
22 flect a recognition of the extreme urgency of the
23 problem and recognize that opportunities for in-
24 creased conservation are rapidly dwindling, by annu-
25 ally providing to the appropriate Committees of Con-

- 1 gress progress reports and action plans with regard
- 2 to the goals and activities identified in paragraphs
- 3 (1) and (2).

