

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 19, 2022

The Honorable Martha Williams
Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Williams:

We are writing to you regarding a petition before the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) titled “Petition to List American Mink in Trade as Injurious under the Lacey Act,” submitted in November 2021. We support listing American mink as an injurious species, which would prohibit the importation of live mink and mink pelts into the United States and request an update from the USFWS on the status of this petition.

As noted in the April 28th, 2022 hearing on *Preventing Pandemics through US Wildlife-borne Disease Surveillance* in the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Natural Resources Committee, mink farms pose a “clear and present danger” to humans and wildlife. Mink are highly susceptible to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and outbreaks have been confirmed on at least 18 fur farms in multiple states, with more than 20,000 mink reported dead from the disease. Mink can also transmit a mutated form of the virus back to humans. Such cases have been confirmed in Denmark, Poland and the Netherlands, and have likely occurred in the United States. The threat of mink farms or infected wild mink populations becoming reservoirs for the virus could lead to new SARS-CoV-2 variants and jeopardize efforts to combat the pandemic.

Farmed mink are not only dangerous for human health; the trade in mink and their parts can cause serious ecological damage. Mink regularly escape from captivity and threaten the viability of wild mink populations due to the risk of disease transmission, hybridization, and competition for resources. Wild and free-ranging mink in close proximity to fur farms with COVID-19 outbreaks have tested positive for the virus. Other wildlife species are also susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 and are thus put in danger if they encounter infected captive or escaped mink.

The petition before the USFWS makes a persuasive legal and scientific case that mink farmed for their fur are injurious because they can transmit disease and cause harm to wildlife when they escape. Listing American mink as an injurious species under the Lacey Act would help reduce

the significant risks that farmed mink pose to humans and wildlife and would help combat the COVID-19 global health crisis.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



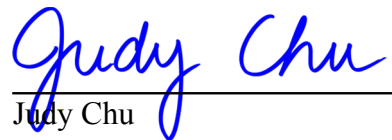
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



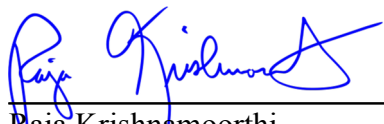
Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



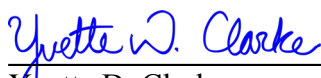
Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



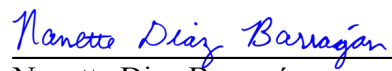
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



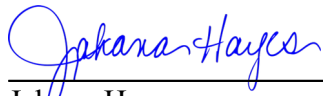
Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



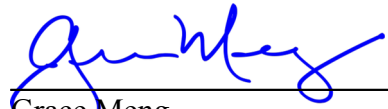
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



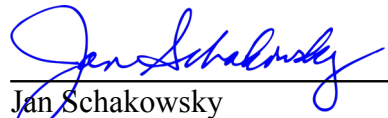
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress