

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 19, 2011

The Honorable Michael Simpson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James Moran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Moran,

We are writing to express our support for funding to combat White-nose Syndrome (“WNS”), a disease decimating North American bats. We greatly appreciate your past support of WNS and request continued funding in FY 2012.

WNS poses the gravest threat faced by U.S. bats. The disease has killed over one million bats since it was discovered in 2006. Over the last five years, WNS has spread to 16 states and three Canadian provinces. The disease currently affects nine species of bats and could spread to half of the nation’s 47 species throughout the country. The loss of bats will likely have serious economic, agricultural, ecological, and public health consequences. Bats consume huge numbers of insects that damage crops, destroy forests and spread disease. According to a recent study, the pest control services provided by insect-eating bats in the United States save American farmers somewhere between \$3.7 billion and \$54 billion a year, most likely about \$22.9 billion. To prevent the spread of WNS, federal and state governments, as well as private landowners, have had to close caves to visitors, harming tourism during the fragile economic recovery.

Continued Department of Interior funding for research and containment of WNS is necessary to halt the westward expansion of the disease. Additional research on the susceptibility of different bat species to WNS, possible biological-control agents, and the disease-producing interface of the fungus, bats, and cave environment is necessary to find solutions to this disease. Additionally, on-the-ground monitoring and management is required in all infected areas. Overall coordination and communication is also needed to ensure efficiency and the sharing of information and resources.

While budgets are tight, money spent on WNS is a wise investment. Conducting WNS research, management, and prevention now will reduce future expenses to the economy. We hope that you will support the need for continued funding for WNS in 2012.

Sincerely,



PETER WELCH
Member of Congress



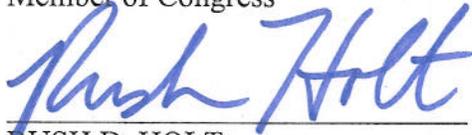
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Member of Congress



FORTNEY PETE STARK
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Member of Congress



DENNIS J. KUCINICH
Member of Congress



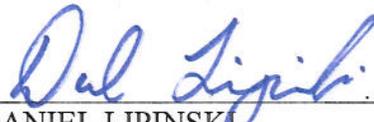
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Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress



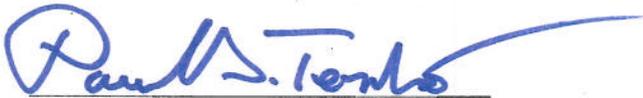
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DANIEL LIPINSKI
Member of Congress



ROSCOE G. BARTLETT
Member of Congress



PAUL TONKO
Member of Congress