



**For Immediate Release**

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***Global Conservation Act Introduced in U.S. Senate: Bi-partisan bill will advance global conservation polices that protect the economy, national security and public health***

WASHINGTON (June 18, 2010) – Senators from both parties yesterday introduced the Global Conservation Act of 2010 S. 3508 that would, for the first time, place the strategic and diplomatic resources of the U.S. government behind efforts to address extinction and natural resource depletion worldwide. Companion legislation (H.R. 4959) was introduced on March 26 in the U.S. House of Representatives.

With the accelerating destruction of forests, reefs and other natural ecosystems, scientists project that half of all species could be driven to the brink of extinction by the end of the century. And experts are tracking trends revealing that people around the world are losing sources of fresh water, fuelwood, medicines and other products from nature.

“As our world grows increasingly intertwined through commerce, communication and culture, we must also work together to protect the earth’s natural resources through conservation,” said Senator Tom Udall (D-NM), the Senate bill’s lead Democratic sponsor. “This bill acknowledges the important role our natural resources play in global economics, health and security, and takes steps to strengthen the United States’ involvement and productivity in conservation on a global scale.”

“Even as six federal agencies conduct conservation programs around the globe, the U.S. government still lacks a coordinated, overarching strategy for stopping environmental destruction,” said Jeff Wise of the Pew Environment Group who directs the Alliance for Global Conservation. “The Global Conservation Act would mandate such a strategy.”

The bill would require that, under the coordination of the White House, agencies come up with a plan to:

- Protect millions of square miles of land and sea,
- Address illegal and unregulated fishing around the world,
- Safeguard the natural sources of fresh water to several major population centers around the world,
- Stop the worst wildlife trafficking operations, and
- Stabilize environmental destruction trends in areas vulnerable to conflict and instability.

The bill identifies a coordinator in the executive branch to ensure action and encourages the administration to secure additional funding and support for a global conservation strategy from other countries—including European nations, Japan, China, and India.

“Thanks to the work of Senators Udall and Brownback, this landmark bill represents a major step forward in efforts to address worldwide resource destruction and species loss,” said Wise. “The legislation lays out a common-sense strategy that will help protect the world’s most ecologically and economically important wilderness and marine areas and promote global security.”

Healthy terrestrial and marine ecosystems are critical to food security and disaster prevention. An analysis by David Pimentel at Cornell University concludes that wild species such as birds and insects provide US\$100 billion worth of pest control services to world agriculture every year. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, healthy coral reefs reduce the impact of large storms on coastal populations, a protective function valued at US\$9 billion a year.

The destruction of natural areas can come at a tremendous cost. Research by the World Resources Institute has found that medicines derived from natural sources, including 10 of the world’s 25 top-selling drugs, have a market value of US\$75-\$150 billion per year. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, current extinction rates could eliminate at least one prescription drug from entering the market every two years.

“Fields, trees, streams, and wildlife are essential for rich and poor countries alike,” according to Kenneth Arrow, Professor of Economics Emeritus, Stanford University and Nobel Laureate in Economics. “Wealthy societies depend on clean water, recreation, and storm and flood control. And the poorest communities in the world rely on nature for their livelihoods and sometimes their very survival.”

The Alliance for Global Conservation—a coalition of some of the world’s major conservation organizations including Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, the Pew Environment Group, Wildlife Conservation Society and the World Wildlife Fund—is working to prevent the destruction of the world’s remaining natural ecosystems for the species and human communities that depend on them. [www.actforconservation.org](http://www.actforconservation.org)

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