

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 23rd, 2008

Premier Wen Jiabao
State Council of the People's Republic of China
Beijing, CHINA

Dear Honorable Premier Wen Jiabao:

We would like to express our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims of the recent earthquake in your country. We were deeply saddened by the loss of life, and we extend our best wishes to the Chinese people during this very difficult time.

The Chinese people deserve tremendous credit for the continued survival of tigers in the wild. Tigers are arguably the most powerful, majestic and universally recognized symbol of nature on Earth. In honor of the 15th anniversary of China's trade ban on tiger bone and rhino horn, we would like to congratulate you and the rest of the State Council for the tremendous contribution that the ban has made to tiger conservation. Over a decade later, we are concerned about requests that the 1993 ban be lifted, allowing the legal tiger trade to resume within China. We strongly believe that legalizing trade in tiger products on any scale within China would be disastrous for wild tigers.

We wish to call your attention to the escalating threats faced by the world's last wild tigers, which will not survive without China's continued efforts to conserve the species. A comprehensive scientific study of tiger habitat completed in 2006 revealed that wild tigers occupy 40 percent less habitat than they were thought to occupy only 10 years ago. As you know, among the 14 tiger-range countries, China hosts important tiger habitat. Today, the worldwide number of tigers in the wild may have dropped below 3,500, and experts warn that wild tigers cannot survive another decade like the last. To conserve this species, we must commit to bold policies and engage local, national and international communities.

One such policy that has been successful, and should be preserved, in the conservation of wild tigers is the moratorium on tiger trade. We are concerned that farming tigers for trade will revive the declining demand for tiger parts and increase poaching pressure on wild tigers. Killing a wild tiger costs as little as 10 U.S. dollars (less than 80 yuan), making profit margins from poaching tigers far greater than those from raising them on farms. Legal trade in products from tiger farms would only speed their demise by creating more consumer demand and simultaneously facilitating the illegal laundering of wild-caught tigers. With so few tigers remaining in the wild (fewer than 50 in China), we must continue efforts to prevent their decline and end the consumption of tiger parts from any source.

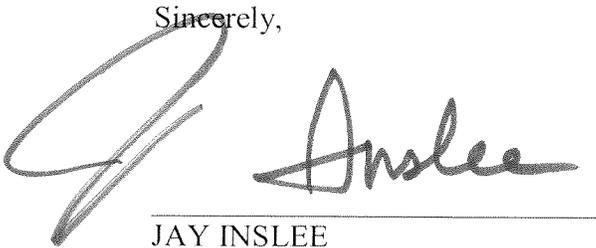
We understand that the traditional Chinese medicine industry already has developed plentiful and effective substitutes for tiger derivatives, and supports the ban on tiger trade for the harmony of people and nature.

We urge you to increase your investment in intelligence-led law enforcement in China and consider entering into a regional anti-trafficking agreement with other tiger-range states to help finally put an end to the trade in tiger parts and derivatives from all sources.

Additionally, we request that you continue your leadership in conserving wild tigers by keeping the 1993 ban on the trade in tiger products in place. This gesture would truly be a gift to the world which treasure and benefit from having wild tigers in healthy ecosystems.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,



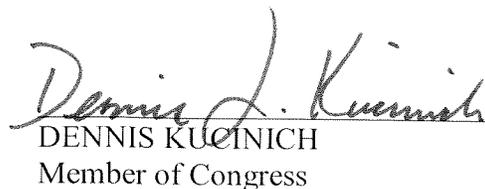
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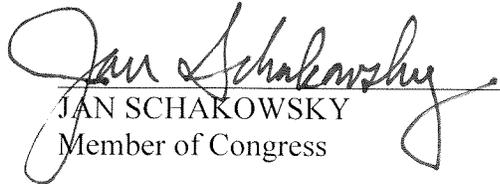
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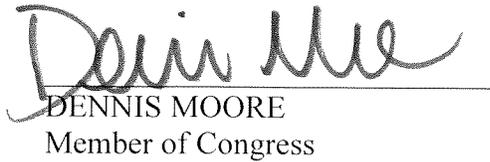
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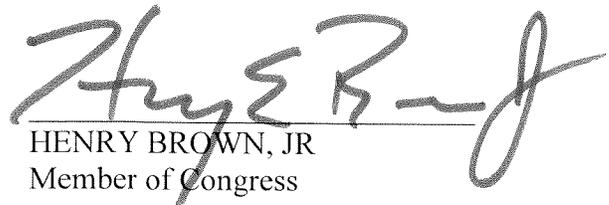

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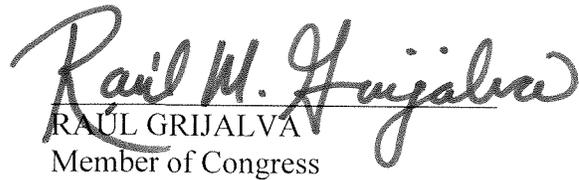

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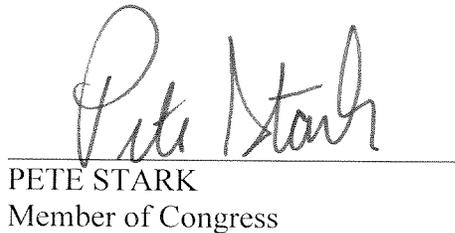

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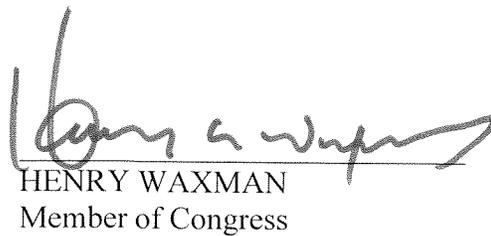

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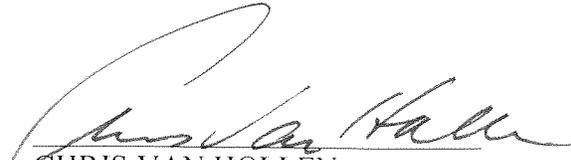

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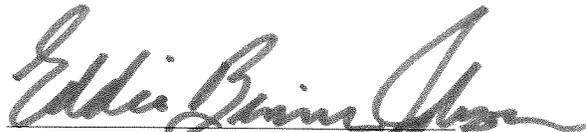

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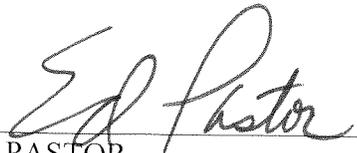

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