



Press Release

New Bill Will Help Species Imperiled by Climate Change

Global Warming Wildlife Survival Bill calls for study, solutions

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Washington, DC -- Today, Senators Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA), announced that they will soon be introducing the Global Warming Wildlife Survival bill, landmark legislation addressing the threat of climate change to wildlife, oceans, and imperiled species.

The bill dedicates the country's best scientific minds to identifying species and habitats likely to be harmed by global warming, and calls for a coordinated national strategy to address those threats.

"As we work to mitigate the causes of global warming, we must also take urgent action to address its effects on wildlife, oceans, and other natural systems on which we all depend," Senator Whitehouse said in a press release.

The bill is the first of its kind and includes critical components for the nation's most imperiled plants and animals, convening in-depth regional scientific discussions and a National Academy of Sciences panel to examine the impacts of climate change on endangered, threatened, and otherwise imperiled species and recommend action.

"Senator Whitehouse and Senator Boxer are taking a critical first step in protecting our most imperiled species, and we applaud their leadership on this issue," said Susan Holmes of Earthjustice. "We cannot sit back and allow animals like the polar bear to disappear forever. This bill will ensure that we have the best information about how wildlife and plants are being impacted by climate change, and will generate real solutions to help them adapt and survive."

Along with environmental groups, this bill is being supported by members of faith and scientific communities, who are joining forces around the moral and practical imperative to help species that are in trouble due to global warming. Together, they have called on Congress to help improve understanding of the link between global warming and extinction -- an understanding that leads to solutions to safeguard the diversity of life.

"This is critical legislation," said Peter Illyn, director of the evangelical Christian conservation group Restoring Eden. "Faithful and wise stewardship requires the objectivity of sound science coupled with the moral imperatives of faith. Protecting the diversity and fruitfulness of the web of life is a sacred trust and we will reap the benefits or suffer the consequences of the choices we make."

"Climate change has made most of our plans for recovering at-risk species obsolete," said Dr. Dennis Murphy, Professor, University of Nevada, and member, National Research Council's Board on Environmental Studies and Toxicology. "In the face of novel and still mostly unpredictable environmental changes ahead, this bill will be crucial to our ability to respond to the needs of imperiled species."

Global warming is a leading cause of species extinction: hundreds of plants and animals, from grizzly bears to coral reefs, are already declining due to global warming, and the United Nation's International Panel on Climate Change report estimates that between 20 and 30 percent of animal and plant species face a risk of extinction if global warming continues



Baby leatherback turtle
Photo by National Park Service

unabated.

"We know our nation's wildlife are in trouble, and that species already on the brink of extinction are most at-risk from global warming," said Kate Freund of Earthjustice. "This bill creates a national strategy for getting us to the next step: how we are going to save them."

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