

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 31, 2011

The Honorable Dan Ashe
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Director Ashe,

We write to offer our strong support for the Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) proposed rule to remove the exemption for inter-subspecific crossed or generic tigers (*Panthera tigris*) from the registration requirements of the Captive-Bred Wildlife regulations that implement the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

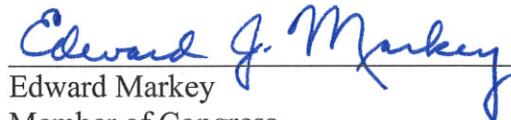
Best estimates indicate that the captive tiger population in the United States could be as high as 5,000 animals, in comparison to as few as 3,200 remaining in the wild today. Approximately six percent of the captive tiger population in the United States resides in facilities accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The remaining captive tigers are privately owned and either regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under State regulation, or under no regulation at all. Under this patchwork of regulations, it is impossible to accurately account for the number of captive tigers in the U.S., but it remains clear that the U.S. has one of the largest populations in the world. Therefore, it is imperative to improve the tracking and monitoring of these tigers to ensure that their parts do not enter into the illegal wildlife trade.

Given the recent incident in Zanesville, Ohio, involving the escape of over fifty exotic animals, including eighteen unregistered tigers, we strongly support this proposed rule, which would require annual reporting by persons holding tigers to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The FWS will be able to collect this information, giving us a better understanding of how many tigers are living in the U.S., and what happens to their parts when they are killed or die. This information will be a critical tool for definitively demonstrating to other nations that U.S. captive tigers and their parts are properly accounted for. In addition, removing this exemption would bring the U.S. into better compliance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species Resolution 12.5, which since 2002, has contained language urging countries with captive bred tigers to ensure that adequate management practices and controls are in place to prevent parts from entering into the illegal wildlife trade.

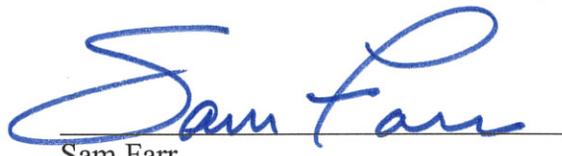
To that end, we strongly encourage the FWS to move quickly to finalize this proposed rule to improve monitoring of the captive tiger population in the U.S., furthering our commitment to preventing the illegal trade of tigers and their parts.

Sincerely,

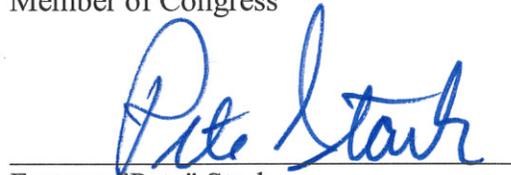

Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress

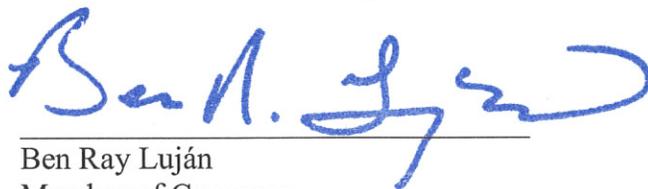

Edward Markey
Member of Congress

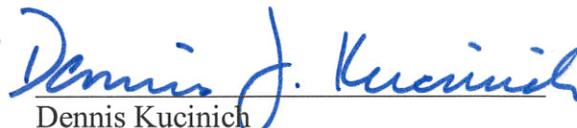

James P. Moran
Member of Congress


Sam Farr
Member of Congress

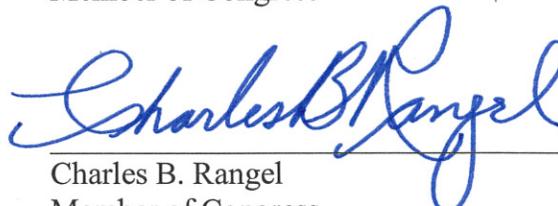

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress


Fortney "Pete" Stark
Member of Congress

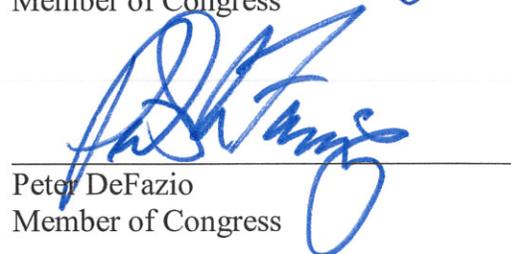

Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress


Dennis Kucinich
Member of Congress


Bob Filner
Member of Congress


Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress


Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress


Peter DeFazio
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