

Commission on Religion in Appalachia * Episcopal Church, Washington Office *
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Washington Office* General Board of Church and
Society, United Methodist Church * Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns * Mennonite Central
Committee * National Council of Churches USA * Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington
Office * United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

September 28, 2005

House of Representatives
United States Congress
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

In Scripture, God expresses awe and pleasure with all of God's creation, paying attention to even the seemingly least significant creature. In the story of Noah's ark, God reveals the desire that all life be preserved. We, as human members of God's family, are called to care for God's creation and all of God's creatures.

In recent decades, one way to show this compassion and fulfill our stewardship duty has been to implement the Endangered Species Act. The Endangered Species Act has worked to prevent extinctions, stabilize declining species, and bring some at-risk species to the point of recovery. Scientists have estimated that nearly 200 more species would have gone extinct without the Endangered Species Act and over 40 percent of the species protected by the Endangered Species Act have stabilized or improved their populations.

Legislation championed by Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo (HR 3824) would effectively decimate the Endangered Species Act. We urge you to oppose HR 3824 on the moral grounds that extinction is not stewardship and that one of humanity's responsibilities is to care for all living things. We disavow misleading economic interests that would drive us to sacrifice the wonder, beauty, usefulness, and graciousness of the gifts God has given us all. We firmly hold that we are called to live our lives to glorify God and that development and profit at the expense of God's glory, of which the environment and all the species are but part, is sinful.

We oppose bills that would weaken the Endangered Species Act. As people of faith and as a society, let us ensure that species needing protection are put on the Endangered Species list, that science is allowed to inform those decisions, that the habitat of endangered species is safeguarded, and that endangered species programs receive adequate funding.

As part of our commitment to God we must remember and honor God's covenant with us all:
"the sign of the covenant I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you,
for all future generations" (Genesis 9:12).

Sincerely,

Commission on Religion in Appalachia
Episcopal Church, Washington Office
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Washington Office
General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church
Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns
Mennonite Central Committee
National Council of Churches USA
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries