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**SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8009**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2022 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Lovelett, Das, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Lovick, Rolfes, Saldaña, Stanford, Trudeau, Wellman, and C. Wilson

TO THE HONORABLE JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR., PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND TO THE HONORABLE JAY INSLEE, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON, AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, THE WASHINGTON CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, THE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, AND THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME AND DIVISION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent and petition as follows:

WHEREAS, The people of Washington have an important relationship with nature and have called on their local, state, and federal government to preserve and protect nature both within the State of Washington and across the United States; and

WHEREAS, Washington is the home of species and habitats that are of ecological, spiritual, cultural, historic, recreational, and scientific value to the people of Washington and need to be protected both now and for future generations; and

WHEREAS, Washington ecosystems support 140 mammal, 470 marine and freshwater fish, 341 bird, 25 amphibian, 21 reptile, 3,100 vascular plants and lichen, and over 20,000 invertebrate species, of which 7.3 percent are at risk of extinction, ranking 18th in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission lists 45 species as endangered, threatened, or sensitive, and another 102 as candidate species; and

WHEREAS, The biodiversity crisis poses severe challenges to species with narrow ecological niches, many of which depend on the continued health of the nine diverse ecoregions in Washington; and

WHEREAS, Washington faces unique threats to biodiversity as the most densely populated state in the Western United States; and

WHEREAS, Washington already continues to lead and collaborate on other aspects of environmental conservation across state and local lines; and

WHEREAS, Washington and the United States are facing an unprecedented biodiversity crisis, largely driven by human activity; and

WHEREAS, Addressing the biodiversity crisis requires coordinated action at a local, regional, national, and global scale; and

WHEREAS, The decline of biodiversity disproportionately impacts Indigenous and other communities that rely on nature for essential services, including Native Americans and Alaska Natives who offer unique perspectives and traditional ecological knowledge critical to preserving biodiversity; and

WHEREAS, The United States possesses an abundance and great diversity of species of fish, wildlife, and plants that are of significant value to the United States for intrinsic, aesthetic, ecological, educational, cultural, recreational, economic, and scientific reasons; and

WHEREAS, The decline of biodiversity presents a direct threat to the security, health, and well-being of the people of the United States by causing economic harm through the loss of valuable ecosystem services such as zoonotic disease buffering, pollination, water filtration, soil replenishment, provision of game species, medicinal products, recreational opportunities, and others; and

WHEREAS, Communities of color, low-income communities, tribal communities, and other populations have been disproportionately impacted by the siting of environmentally degrading activities, and excluded from conservation efforts, and face disproportionate impacts from biodiversity loss; and

WHEREAS, There is no coordinating policy to maximize the effectiveness of the federal government's conservation efforts and collaboration with the states, local governments, tribes, private landowners, and other nongovernmental stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, The United States should play a leading role on the international stage in addressing the biodiversity crisis, yet the United States is not a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species, and other relevant international agreements; does not issue a national biodiversity outlook, contrary to most other countries; and does not have a national biodiversity strategy as part of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Your memorialists respectfully call on the federal government to:

(1) Establish a national biodiversity strategy to ensure the conservation and restoration of the nation's biodiversity; secure and restore the ecosystem services provided by nature for current and future generations; deliver on the United Nations sustainable development goals; set ambitious yet necessary goals for protecting biodiversity in the coming decades; promote social equity and justice in the conservation of the nation's biodiversity; coordinate the actions of federal agencies to advance the conservation of biodiversity; promote collaboration among the federal, state, and tribal governments, nongovernmental stakeholders, civil society, and internationally to advance conservation; honor the federal trust obligations to tribal nations and Native Americans; and provide global leadership in addressing the biodiversity crisis; and

(2) Develop the national biodiversity strategy with significant public input and in collaboration and coordination with federal and state agencies, including those in Washington, tribes, communities of color, low-income communities, private landowners, and other nongovernmental stakeholders; and

(3) Include in the national biodiversity strategy direction on: Supporting the national goal of conserving at least 30 percent of United States lands and waters to protect biodiversity by 2030; setting other goals necessary to reduce the threats to biodiversity as indicated by the best available scientific information; taking action to protect threatened, endangered, and at-risk species from further imperilment or extinction; reviewing existing laws, plans, programs, and strategies that are relevant to addressing threats to biodiversity to assess how they can contribute to the objectives of this Memorial and, as found necessary, to recommend new laws, plans, programs, and strategies; and funding existing conservation programs and developing new funding sources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately transmitted to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States, the Honorable Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of Washington, the secretary of the Interior, the director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the United Nations environment programme and division for sustainable development goals.