PENNSYLVANIA AUDUBON COUNCIL

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Elizabeth Gray, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer
National Audubon Society

Marshall Johnson
Chief Conservation Officer
National Audubon Society

Dear Dr. Gray and Mr. Marshall,

Thank you very much for your prompt and thoughtful response to our email.

We appreciate the important work NAS has done and continues to do on behalf of birds, including the impressive habitat conservation work already accomplished under Flight Plan. We also understand the importance of each of the complementary approaches to the protection of birds and habitat that you reference in your message. We were aware when we sent our email that litigation has not been one of NAS' primary conservation strategies.

That said, we remain disappointed by NAS' decision not to join in litigation challenging the grossly irresponsible, indefensible and dangerous redefinition of "harm" under the ESA.

Just as climate change poses an existential threat to life on Earth, the Trump administration poses an existential threat to every single environmental advancement and protection enacted since the first Earth Day in 1970. As you well know, the U.S. has never experienced an administration so unrelentingly hostile to even the most basic environmental protections. As you also know, the Republican Congress has with few exceptions done nothing to challenge the administration's undermining of environmental laws passed by – yes -- Congress. And, finally, we are all painfully aware that at least some of the ecological damage done by this administration will be irreparable.

In this harsh climate – pun intended – we believe we are all, individuals and organizations alike, called upon to stretch beyond our comfort zones to do whatever we can to protect the planet that sustains us and the non-human species that we cherish.

In our view, NAS' long tradition of bipartisanship – and, indeed, the fact that it seldom engages in litigation, particularly at the national level – makes it an especially credible and potentially powerful partner in an action re: the ESA. We hope NAS will reconsider its decision and/or explore the feasibility of filing an amicus brief supporting one of the lawsuits and ensuring that the needs of birds are explicitly considered in court.

Thank you again for your dedication to birds, your leadership, and your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Liz Brensinger, Lehigh Valley Audubon Society
Endangered Species Act Co-Lead,
PAAC Advocacy and Conservation Committee

Sue Murawski, Presque Isle Audubon Society
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