

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 7, 2012

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C. Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

We were pleased with your recent announcement on the prohibition (pursuant to the Lacey Act) of the interstate transport and importation of live individuals, gametes, viable eggs, or hybrids of the Burmese python, northern and southern African pythons, and yellow anaconda into the United States. These large, non-native species are known predators within the Everglades, and are destroying endangered wildlife while upsetting the delicate balance of this sensitive ecosystem.

We believe that this ban is long overdue and an important step in the process. However, it is insufficient as a long-term solution to eradicate the problem. Other snakes that were not included in the ban, such as the reticulated python, boa constrictor, DeSchauensee's anaconda, green anaconda and Beni anaconda, pose similar threats to both the Everglades and other ecosystems across the country.

Furthermore, this ban does not address the snakes that are already living in the wild. Even conservative estimates state the possibility of thousands of these large snakes already loose and breeding. We would like to know if the Department of Interior has a similar comprehensive plan for the snakes, and what else the Department plans to do on the issue. In addition, does the Department have any plans to develop or support rapid response teams that can address reports of large snake species that have not yet become established in the wild?

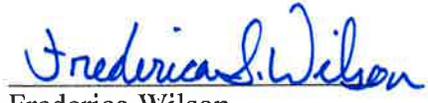
As you know, the federal government plays a critically important role in Everglades restoration. There are hundreds of millions of federal dollars invested in Everglades restoration efforts. The Everglades are a unique national treasure found nowhere else in the world. We must protect this crucial and beautiful ecosystem. A comprehensive plan for dealing with these invasive species would help to do just that.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your continued support of the Everglades. We look forward to hearing back from you on how Congress can work with the Department and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive plan for eliminating these snakes in order to preserve and protect the habitat living in the Everglades.

Sincerely,

  
Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

  
Bill Nelson  
United States Senator

  
Frederica Wilson  
Member of Congress

  
Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress

  
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

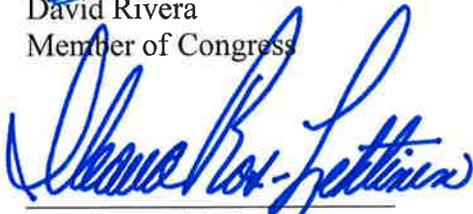
  
Allen West  
Member of Congress

  
C.W. Bill Young  
Member of Congress

  
Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress

  
Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress

  
David Rivera  
Member of Congress

  
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
Member of Congress