

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 16, 2009

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500-0003

Dear President Obama:

America's accredited zoos and aquariums are valuable educational, ecological, and economic assets that enrich communities throughout the country. We believe that it is in our national interest to build and maintain the finest zoological institutions on the planet, and we write to urge you to look for ways in which your Administration can support this goal.

The expertise at many of our nation's zoos and aquariums makes them leaders in animal care and important contributors to wildlife science and environmental education. Not only do they help train future generations of veterinarians and conservationists, but they also have a unique ability to connect with the American people. More than 95% of Americans will visit an accredited zoo or aquarium at some point in their life, and with a special emphasis on children and families, they are a key component of informal science education and lifetime learning. Indeed, the interest sparked by an early visit to a zoo or aquarium can spark a long term interest in environmental stewardship.

Not only do these institutions provide the expertise needed to help tackle many of our nation's ecological challenges, from marine conservation to climate change, but they are also local economic engines. Our nation's zoos and aquariums generate more than \$8 billion in annual economic activity. As anchors for tourism and urban development, they have a proven ability to stimulate the economy.

Therefore, we ask that your administration, including the Departments of Education, Interior, Commerce and Agriculture look for new opportunities to cooperate with accredited zoos and aquariums in the areas of science education; threatened and endangered species display and recovery; advancement of animal care; and economic development.

On behalf of more than 175 million Americans who visit zoos and aquariums annually and rely on them as valuable community assets, we thank you for consideration of this request.

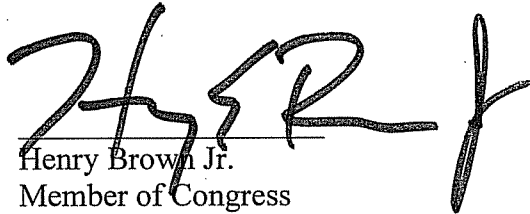
Sincerely,



Daniel Lipinski
Member of Congress



Spencer Bachus
Member of Congress



Henry Brown Jr.
Member of Congress



Artur Davis
Member of Congress



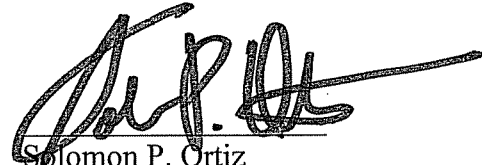
Howard Coble
Member of Congress



Leonard L. Boswell
Member of Congress



Mary Bono Mack
Member of Congress



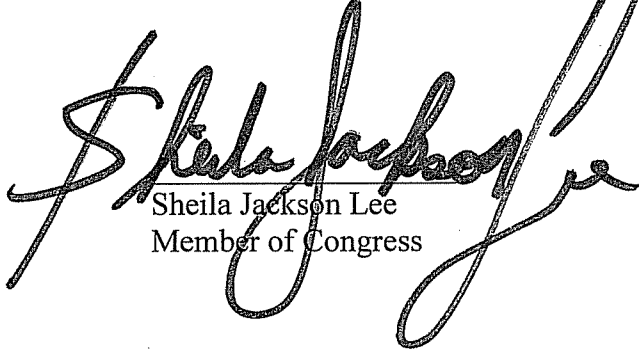
Solomon P. Ortiz
Member of Congress



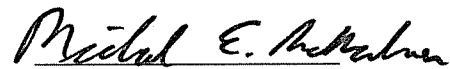
Patrick J. Kennedy
Member of Congress



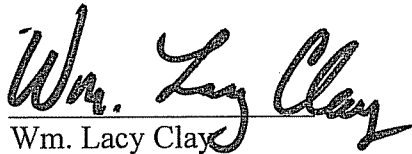
Michael McCaul
Member of Congress



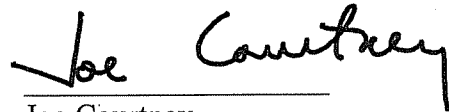
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



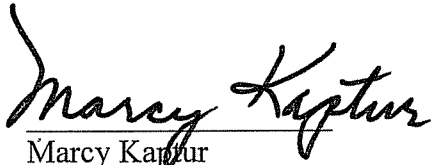
Michael E. McMahon
Member of Congress



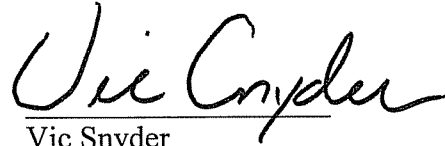
Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



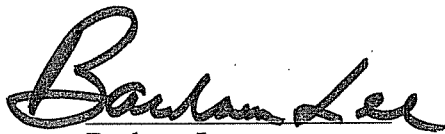
Vic Snyder
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



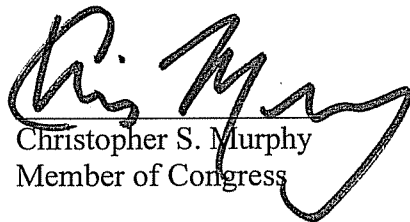
Michael Michaud
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress



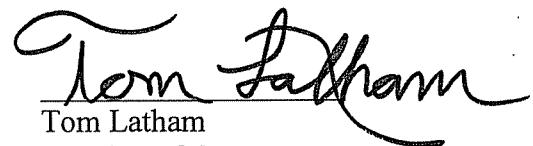
Christopher S. Murphy
Member of Congress



Erik Paulsen
Member of Congress



Joe Sestak
Member of Congress



Tom Latham
Member of Congress

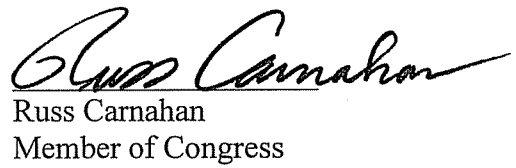


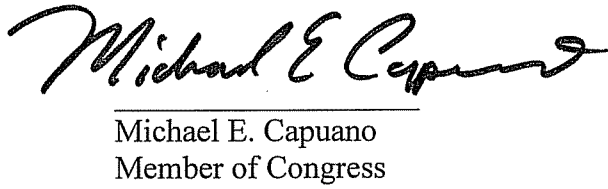
Bruce Braley
Member of Congress

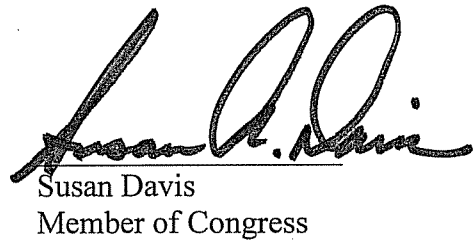


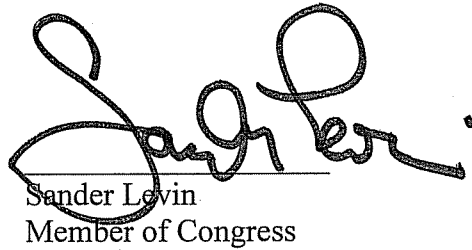
Ed Whitfield
Member of Congress

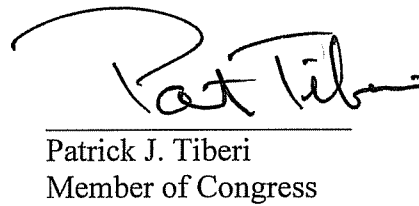

John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

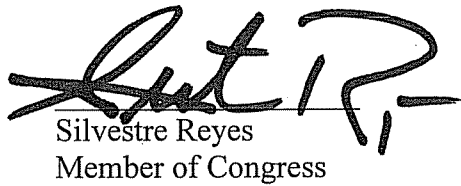

Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress

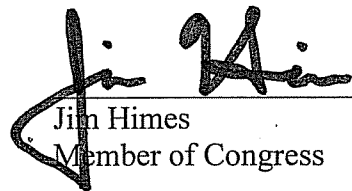

Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress

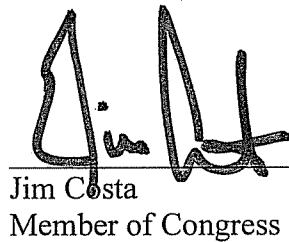

Susan Davis
Member of Congress

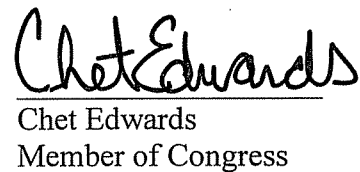

Sander Levin
Member of Congress

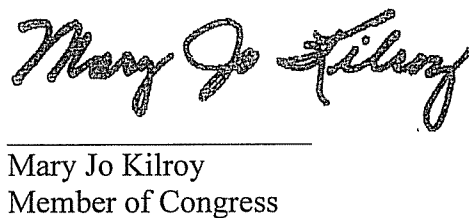

Patrick J. Tiberi
Member of Congress

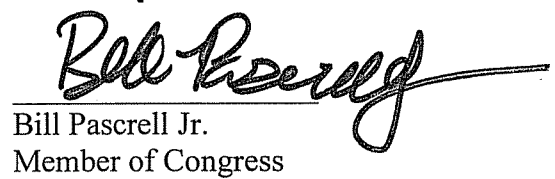

Silvestre Reyes
Member of Congress

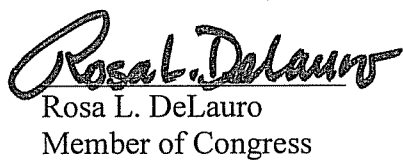

Jim Himes
Member of Congress

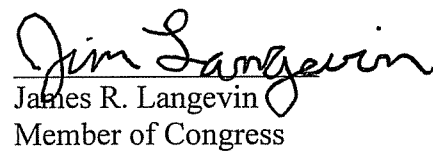

Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Chet Edwards
Member of Congress



Mary Jo Kilroy
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell Jr.
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

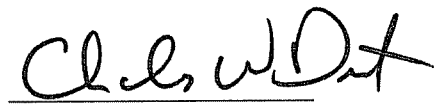

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

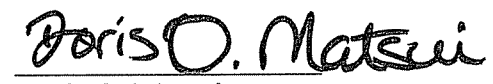

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

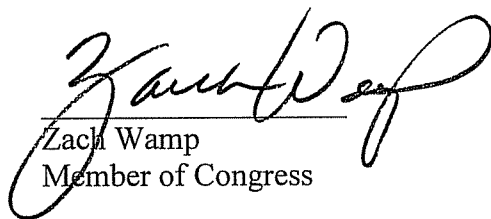

Sam Farr
Member of Congress

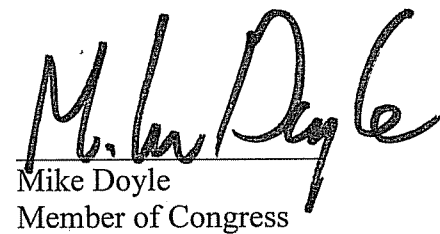

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

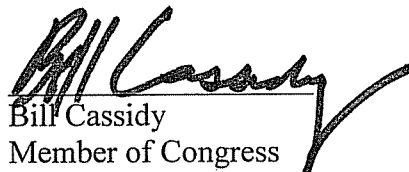

Ed Pastor
Member of Congress

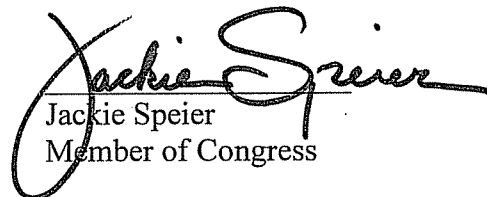

Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress

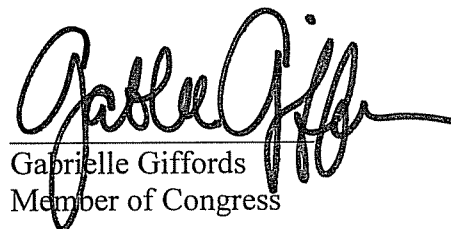

Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress

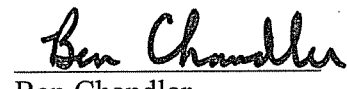

Zach Wamp
Member of Congress


Mike Doyle
Member of Congress


Bill Cassidy
Member of Congress


Jackie Speier
Member of Congress


Gabrielle Giffords
Member of Congress


Ben Chandler
Member of Congress