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February 3, 2016

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you know, the 17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa, this fall. This conference occurs once every three years, and the United States sends a delegation to negotiate protections for imperiled wildlife subject to legal and illegal trade. In the past, the Natural Resources Committee has held an oversight hearing in advance of the conference to give Members the opportunity to engage the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and I request that we resume that tradition with a hearing this spring.

Illegal trade in fish and wildlife products is a multi-billion-dollar industry that harms the environment and disadvantages responsible harvesters of natural resources. Particularly in light of the ongoing poaching and trafficking crisis centered around African elephants and rhinoceros, the Committee has a responsibility to understand the current issues in wildlife trade, and to provide oversight of and input into the negotiating positions and proposals of the U.S. Government. I look forward to your response and to this important hearing. Should you have any questions, contact Matt Strickler of the House Natural Resources Committee Democratic staff at 202-225-6065.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources