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June 25, 2020

Statement for the Record of Congressman Lieu

House Committee on Natural Resources

Legislative Hearing of H.R. 2264 – the Bear Protection Act

I am grateful to Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member McClintock for recognizing the importance of environmental stewardship by considering H.R. 2264 in a legislative hearing. This bipartisan legislation—which I introduced with my colleagues Rodney Davis, Ann Kuster, and Glenn Thompson—would conserve bear populations by prohibiting the trade of bear viscera. Specifically, H.R. 2264 would prohibit the import, export, possession, transport, interstate commerce, and foreign commerce of bear viscera.

The eight currently extant species of bear are listed across Appendices I and II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. In the United States, federal and state officials have revealed that American bears have been poached for their viscera. Allowing commercial bear poaching for their internal organs puts these majestic animals at risk and subjects them to inhumane treatment. Throughout my career, I have been a strong supporter of wildlife conservation. As the survival of certain species becomes more threatened by human activity, I believe we must support policies to promote conservation.

It has been long recognized that states have a central role in wildlife management. Through the Lacey Act, the federal government has the responsibility of enforcing the ban on illegal wildlife trafficking in interstate and foreign commerce. H.R. 2264 would not restrict legal bear hunting. Instead, it would allow the federal government to play a complementary role to the states in saving wild animals from reckless commercial exploitation.

The Bear Protection Act enjoys strong bipartisan support in Congress, and I wish to thank Representatives Davis, Kuster, and Thompson for their leadership on this issue. The measure has been introduced in previous Congresses and passed the Senate twice. The enactment of this legislation would protect our bear populations from further unwarranted harm. H.R. 2264 is a commonsense piece of legislation and I look forward to working with this committee to see it through the legislative process in the House.

Our environment is blessed with an abundance of natural resources and we have a duty to protect it. Efforts to conserve wildlife and combat wildlife trafficking must remain a priority. Protecting our planet and its animals is our moral duty.

Once again, I thank the Committee for acting swiftly on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ted W. Lieu". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "T".

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress