



HOW THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN TARGETS WILDLIFE BORNE DISEASE TO PREVENT THE NEXT DEADLY GLOBAL PANDEMIC

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In March 2021 Congress passed H.R. 1319, the *American Rescue Plan*, to offer direct financial relief to the American people, strengthen the economy and provide resources to beat the coronavirus pandemic. Chair Raúl M. Grijalva and House Natural Resources Committee Democrats secured \$105 million for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in the bill to help prevent the next pandemic, stop the spread of wildlife disease, and support institutions caring for threatened and endangered species that have lost revenues due to the pandemic.

The coronavirus that caused COVID-19 first spread to humans from an animal, believed to be either a bat or an endangered mammal called a pangolin. According to public health experts, pathogens from animals that affect humans account for 75 percent of emerging diseases. The majority of these diseases come from wildlife. Proactively stopping the spread of wildlife-borne diseases to humans is crucial to preventing future global pandemics. Our federal agencies have a role to play in protecting the public from animal-to-human disease transmission.

FWS and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) play important roles in tracking wildlife diseases before they jump to humans. They enforce trade bans of risky wildlife species, coordinate with states and other federal agencies, and address wildlife disease outbreaks when they occur. By making it more possible for these agencies to crack down on the risky wildlife trade, focus on early detection of emerging wildlife-borne diseases that threaten people, provide rapid response, and pursue science-based wildlife management, the resources in the American Rescue Plan can help prevent the next pandemic.

WILDLIFE DISEASE PROVISIONS IN THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

\$75 million is dedicated to addressing wildlife-borne diseases before they infect humans. This money will expand research and surveillance programs, strengthen inspections and investigations of risky animal imports, and make it easier for federal agencies to use existing authorities to control the trade in species that pose a risk to human health. Much of this funding will support FWS, other federal agencies, states, Tribes, and Territories in carrying out disease surveillance and research programs. The vast majority of emerging infectious diseases stem from wildlife, and infectious disease experts have advocated funding increases of this kind for a long time.

\$30 million will make up recent budget shortfalls for zoos, aquariums, and research institutions that provide care and rescue to wildlife species listed under the Endangered Species Act. These entities have lost significant revenues due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making it difficult to provide for the threatened and endangered animals in their care.

The federal funds secured by Chair Grijalva and House Natural Resources Committee Democrats are critical for preventing future pandemics caused by wildlife disease and for supporting the zoos, aquariums, and research institutions that care for protected species.