

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Subject: Let's stand up for nature

Dear Prime Minister:

Canada's expansive, diverse natural bounty is our greatest national asset. Protecting and stewarding this abundant natural habitat is a responsibility incumbent upon all Canadians. For this reason, when we launched the Smart Prosperity Initiative in 2016, we identified conserving and valuing nature as one of five key actions for building a stronger, cleaner economy.

As a diverse group of leaders from business and civil society across Canada, we congratulate you and your government for making real progress on coordinating a national effort to address climate change and move towards a low carbon, competitive economy. We urge you to advance an equally timely agenda to support the protection of nature and biodiversity.

The scale of Canada's natural endowment is staggering. Our Great Lakes and inland waters hold 20% of the world's surface freshwater. We have 24% of the world's wetlands, 25% of the global temperate rainforest area, and 33% of the world's boreal forest. Canada holds almost one third of the global land-based carbon storage – a critical component in the fight against climate change.

This rich diversity of natural habitats is vital for many reasons: it makes an invaluable contribution to Canadians' health, well-being and national identity; it is integral to Indigenous communities' economic and cultural sustainability, rights, and ways of life; and it provides irreplaceable habitat for thousands of wildlife species. But that biodiversity is at risk. Half of Canada's wildlife species are declining, with populations falling by an average of 83% since 1970. We can – and must – take action to halt this decline.

Conserving nature is also a smart economic investment. Every year, Canadians spend over \$40 billion on outdoor activities in nature. Our marketable natural resource assets alone are worth an estimated \$750 billion, according to Statistics Canada. And their full value is much higher – providing vital ecosystem services like water filtration, stormwater management, carbon sequestration and crop pollination that support economic sectors and communities in every corner of the country.

With its rich natural heritage, Canada can play a global leadership role in conservation. Our respective organizations have contributed directly to nature protection in many ways: donating oil and gas permits to help create protected areas, setting aside private land for habitat and wildlife conservation, funding and leading large-scale conservation work across Canada, and adopting certification schemes and best management practices for natural resources. And we are prepared to do more.

There is a critical window of opportunity right now for Canada to ramp up its efforts to conserve nature, protect endangered wildlife, and meet our international commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity – including protecting at least 17% of our lands and inland waters and 10% of our coastal and marine areas by 2020. Doing so will involve a range of conservation measures, from basic science and citizen engagement, to habitat restoration, stewardship, co-management and protection. It also will require effective processes for impact assessment and species-at-risk management, which provide the certainty needed for development to go ahead in a responsible, timely and sustainable manner.

As Canada celebrates 150 years, the time is right for the federal, provincial and territorial governments, working with Indigenous communities, the private sector, philanthropists and civil society, to make an historic investment in conserving our natural habitats, protecting species at risk, and securing the natural capital that is the foundation of our health, wealth and well-being. We are ready to assist in any way we can. Together as Canadians let's stand up for nature.

Sincerely,

Meredith Adler, Executive Director, Student Energy

Dominic Barton, Global Managing Director, McKinsey and company

Ross Beaty, Executive Chairman, Alterra Power Corp; Chairman, Pan American Silver Corp

John Coyne, Vice President, Legal & External Affairs and General Counsel, Unilever Canada

Michael Crothers, President & Canada Country Chair, Shell Canada

Arlene Dickinson, CEO, Venture Communications

Richard P. Eno, CEO, BioAmber

Stewart Elgie, Smart Prosperity co-chair; Professor of law and economics, University of Ottawa

Phil Fontaine, Special Advisor, Royal Bank of Canada, Former National Chief, Assembly of First Nations

Greg Kiessling, Executive Chairman, Bullfrog Power

John Lounds, President and CEO, Nature Conservancy of Canada

David Miller, President and CEO, WWF-Canada

Lorraine Mitchelmore, Smart Prosperity co-chair; CEO, Field Upgrading; Former President & Canada Country Chair, Shell Canada

Merrell-Ann Phare, Founding Executive Director, Centre for Indigenous Resources

David Runnalls, Board Chair, Pembina Institute

Jean Simard, President and CEO, Aluminium Association of Canada, and co-founder, SWITCH

Vicky Sharpe, Founding President and CEO, Sustainable Development Technology Canada

Marcia Smith, Senior Vice President Sustainability & External Affairs, Teck Resources

Merran Smith, Executive Director, Clean Energy Canada

Rick Smith, Executive Director, Broadbent Institute

John Stackhouse, Senior Vice-President, Office of the CEO, RBC

Kirsten Tisdale, Managing Partner Government and Public Sector, EY (Ernst & Young)

Scott Vaughan, President and CEO, International Institute for Sustainable Development

Annette Verschuren, Smart Prosperity co-chair; CEO, NRStor; former CEO, Home Depot Canada

Rob Wesseling, President and CEO, The Cooperators

Galen Weston, President, Executive Chairman, Loblaw Companies Limited