



Nov. 19, 2021

Dear Senator,

On behalf of Western Leaders Network, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization of more than 450 local and tribal elected officials across the Interior West, I write in support of the nomination of Martha Williams for Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Western Leaders Network organizes local and tribal elected officials in eight western states to protect public lands, culturally significant places and wildlife habitat; advocate for healthy air and waters; build diverse and sustainable local economies; restore native salmon populations in the Interior West and Pacific Northwest; and advance the national 30x30 initiative to fight climate change. Our work and mission revolve around the health of our lands, waterways and wildlife, and we believe these will be protected and properly managed under Williams' direction at USFWS.

Williams has served previously as Director of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, where she managed hundreds of employees and dozens of state parks, and as Deputy Solicitor for Parks and Wildlife at the Department of the Interior during the Obama administration. Her service in these roles and as the current Principal Deputy Director for USFWS have given her the experience necessary to successfully oversee our nation's 568 National Wildlife Refuges.

The National Wildlife Refuge System encompasses 95 million acres of land and 760 million acres of water, and is the only land designation that prioritizes wildlife and habitat conservation above all other uses. As such, USFWS has a crucial role to play in advancing the national 30x30 effort to mitigate our climate crisis by conserving more natural places and slowing the rapid loss of wildlife habitat and biodiversity that keeps our air clean, our water pure and our food supplies plentiful. The health and resilience of wildlife species and their habitats are integral to and indicative of the overall health of our climate, which means we need strong leaders at the helm of agencies like USFWS to help safeguard our climate future.

The position of USFWS director has remained vacant since President Biden took office. It's time to fill it with a qualified leader who will help protect our biodiversity and natural places and help

Western Leaders Network

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secure a healthier, more sustainable future for local and tribal communities across the West and the nation. We urge you to swiftly confirm Williams' nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gwen Lachelt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gwen Lachelt
Executive Director