

# United States Senate

Senator Tom Coburn, MD

September 29, 2010

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McConnell:

I am requesting to be consulted before the Senate enters into any unanimous consent agreements or time limitations regarding H.R. 388, the Crane Conservation Act of 2009; S. 529, the Great Cats and Rare Canids Act; S. 850, the Shark Conservation Act of 2009; S. 859, the Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Amendments of 2009; S. 1748, the Southern Sea Otter Recovery and Research Act. I reserve the right to object to any unanimous consent agreement or rules waivers with respect to these bills.

While these bills may be well intentioned, they do not represent the priorities we should be setting at this time. With millions of Americans out of work and trying to make ends meet in one of the worst economic downturns in recent history and our nation facing yet another fiscal crisis as a result of our \$13.5 trillion national debt, Congress must begin setting priorities.

These bills cumulatively would cost \$124 million to enact over the next five years. None of the activities authorized in any of these bills is paid for by decreasing federal spending in another area of the bloated federal government. While some of these bills create new government programs, none of them eliminate existing programs to offset this increase. Instead, these bills ignore the fiscal crisis facing our nation by authorizing new spending and creating new programs we cannot afford.

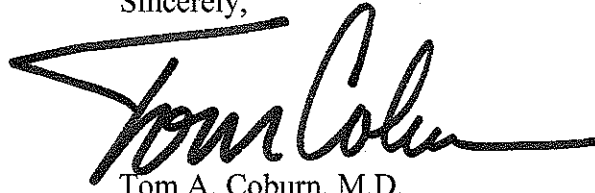
Some of these bills seem to serve little purpose except to cater or fulfill a pledge to special interest groups. Two of these bills (H.R. 388, and S. 529) authorize over \$50 million to be spent in *foreign* countries for animal conservation measures, even while sponsors of these measures are complaining about the outsourcing of American jobs because of unfair trade practices in other countries.

According to the Congressional Research Service, Congress already appropriated over \$350 million in taxpayer funds for international conservation efforts and \$785 million for international climate change assistance. If bill sponsors want to increase funding for species-specific conservation efforts, they should at least use the money that has already been appropriated for international conservation efforts.

In order for me to support any of these bills, they must at least be fully offset and paid for.

Thank you for protecting my rights on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Coburn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tom A. Coburn, M.D.  
U.S. Senator

CC: The Honorable Harry Reid  
U.S. Senator  
CC: The Honorable Russ Feingold  
U.S. Senator  
CC: The Honorable Joseph Lieberman  
U.S. Senator  
CC: The Honorable John Kerry  
U.S. Senator  
CC: The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
U.S. Senator  
CC: The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
U.S. Senator