The Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior  
The Honorable Daniel Ashe, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mr. Douglas Krofta, Chief, Branch of Listing, Endangered Species Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

November 13, 2014

Dear Madam Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Ashe, and Mr. Krofta,

We write to you to express our support to protect the monarch butterfly as a Threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The monarch butterfly population has declined dramatically, by an alarming, statistically significant 90% over 20 years of monitoring. While many factors threaten the monarch’s habitat, it is the loss of milkweed from the key areas where monarchs breed in the American Midwest—primarily driven by extensive use of the herbicide glyphosate on genetically engineered glyphosate-resistant crops—that is thought to be the most significant contributor to the monarch’s population decline. Other contributing factors may include climate change, severe weather events, logging in the overwintering habitat, widespread use of systemic insecticides, disease, and predation.

We request that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) take a leading role in protection and recovery efforts by granting the monarch butterfly protection as a threatened species under the ESA. ESA protection will allow the Service to establish a monarch recovery plan and promote the large scale conservation efforts needed to restore monarch populations.

Once protection is granted, we ask that the Service recognize the important role that research by scientists and citizen scientists has played, and will continue to play, in understanding and conserving the monarch butterfly and its habitat. To this end, we request that the Service streamline the permitting process, so that scientific and conservation research and citizen science activities are encouraged rather than deterred by a listing. In addition, we support the special 4(d) rule that the petitioners requested (on p. 159 of the petition) to exempt certain activities from the ‘take prohibition’ in order to facilitate monarch butterfly research, citizen monitoring, education, and conservation.

Sincerely,

Michael Achey, M.D.
Compass Medical

Sonia Altizer, Ph.D.
Professor, University of Georgia
Athens, GA

Homero Aridjis
President, Grupo de los Cien and Writer
Mexico

Scott Hoffman Black, M.S.
Executive Director, The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation
Portland, OR

Calhoun Bond, Ph.D.
Professor, Greensboro College
Greensboro, NC

Lincoln Brower, Ph.D.
Professor, Sweet Briar College
Sweet Briar, VA
Peter F. Brussard, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus, University of Nevada
Reno, NV

William Calvert, Ph.D.
Monarch Scientist
Austin, TX

Michael Collins, Ph.D.
Carnegie Museum of Natural History
Pittsburgh, PA

Laurence Cook, Ph.D.
Professor, University of Manchester
Manchester U.K.

Betty Ferber
International Coordinator, Grupo de los Cien
Mexico

Linda Fink, Ph.D.
Professor, Sweet Briar College
Sweet Briar, VA

Ek Val de Gortari, Ph.D.
Professor, CIEco
National Autonomous University of Mexico
Morelia, Michoacán, México

Nicole Hamilton
Loudon Wildlife Conservancy
Leesburg, VA

Annie Holdren, Ph.D.
Exhibitions Curator, Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History
Pacific Grove, CA

Stuart H. Hurlbert, Ph.D.
Emeritus Professor, San Diego State University
San Diego, CA

Laura Jackson, Ph.D.
Director, Tallgrass Prairie Center
Cedar Falls, IA

David G. James, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Washington State University
Prosser, WA

Sarina Jepsen, M.S.
Endangered Species Program Director, The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation
Portland, OR

Barbara Kingsolver, M.S.
Author
Meadowview, VA

Kingston Leong, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus, California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA

Pablo Jaramillo López, Ph.D.
Professor, CIEco
National Autonomous University of Mexico
Morelia, Michoacán, México

Stephen Malcolm, Ph.D.
Professor, Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI

Mia Monroe
Coordinator, Western Monarch Thanksgiving Count
Mill Valley, CA

Eneida Montesinos, M.S.
Consultant, Monarch Butterfly Fund
Anaheim, CA

Gary Nabhan, Ph.D.
Co-Facilitator, Make Way for Monarchs Alliance
Patagonia, AZ

Karen Oberhauser, Ph.D.
Professor, University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN
Paul A. Opler, Ph.D.
Professor, Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado

Diego R. Pérez-Salicrup, Ph.D.
Researcher, CIEco
National Autonomous University of Mexico
Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico

John Pleasants, Ph.D.
Professor, Iowa State University
Ames, IA

Robert Michael Pyle, Ph.D.
Founder, The Xerces Society and
Founding Chairman, The Monarch Project
Grays River, WA

M. Isabel Ramírez, Ph.D.
Professor, CIGA
National Autonomous University of Mexico
Morelia, México

Cuauhtémoc Sáenz-Romero, Ph.D.
Professor, University of Michoacán
Morelia, Michoacán, México

Walter H. Sakai, Ph.D.
Professor, Santa Monica College
Santa Monica, CA

Michelle Solensky, Ph.D.
Professor, University of Jamestown
Jamestown, ND

Douglas W. Tallamy, Ph.D.
Professor, University of Delaware
Newark, DE

Rocío Treviño
El Correo Real, Profauna A.C.
Mexico

Francis Villablanca, Ph.D.
Director, Monarch Alert
San Luis Obispo, CA

Ina Warren
Co-Facilitator, Make Way for Monarchs
Alliance
Brevard, NC

Ernest Williams, Ph.D.
Professor, Hamilton College
Clinton, NY

Louie H. Yang, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, University of California
Davis, CA

Allen M. Young, Ph.D.
Curator Emeritus of Zoology, Milwaukee
Public Museum
Milwaukee, WI

Myron P. Zalucki, Ph.D.
Professor, The University of Queensland
Brisbane, Australia