

March 17, 2021

We, the undersigned scientists, are writing today to show our support for the Monarch Action, Recovery, and Conservation of Habitat Act, or MONARCH Act, of 2021.

The MONARCH Act authorizes the appropriation of \$12.5 million per year for the next five years to a Western Monarch Butterfly Rescue Fund to facilitate the implementation of the Western Monarch Butterfly Conservation Plan prepared by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Specifically, this funding will provide funding to support projects to restore, enhance, and manage the western monarch's overwintering and breeding habitats to support conservation of wild monarch populations in the western U.S.

In the fall of 2020, the Xerces Society's Western Monarch Thanksgiving Count recorded only 1,914 monarch butterflies overwintering on the California coast. This critically low number follows two years with previously unprecedented low numbers, compared to hundreds of thousands of monarchs as recently as four years ago, and millions overwintering in California in the 1980s. The western monarch butterfly overwintering population is nearing collapse, and significant conservation action is needed to avoid losing this incredible migration.

The decline of monarch butterflies in western states is primarily due to loss of their habitat – both the forested groves in which they overwinter and the milkweed and wildflowers that they need from spring to fall – as well as pesticides and climate change. Monarch butterflies and their habitat remain unprotected following the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's recent decision that the species is "warranted but precluded" from listing under the Endangered Species Act.

The MONARCH Act will provide a substantial investment in conservation activities that will directly support the recovery of wild monarch butterflies.

Please give monarch butterflies a chance to recover in the western U.S. by supporting the MONARCH Act of 2021.

Sincerely,

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