

Dear Interior Secretary Jewell,

I write today to oppose the Service's proposed categorical exclusion from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for proposed listing of species as injurious under the Lacey Act.

As a reptile hobbyist, I am overwhelmingly troubled over the impact that listing certain species of snakes and other species commonly held in the reptile trade in the United States will have on my pets, as well as the livelihoods and small businesses of others in the reptile segment of the pet industry. The United States Association of Reptile Keepers (USARK) and others have conducted extensive research and due diligence. They have provided economic impact data and sound science to USFWS to refute many of the findings and concerns raised in the initial proposals. These concerns included the possible violation of NEPA requirements.

Specifically, USFWS ignored important scientific findings that contradicted its pre-determined outcome. State fish and wildlife agencies, research institutions, conservationists, zoos, public educators and even other federal government scientists raised important conservation concerns. Although such concerns are at the heart of NEPA, these were unlawfully ignored.

I, therefore, object to the Service's last minute effort to remove the NEPA protections that are afforded to citizens under the law to prevent the implementation of an onerous rule that will impact the freedom of Americans to enjoy reptiles as pets and own reptile-related businesses while failing to address the potential negative environmental impacts of the rule.

I believe that the listing of these snakes, and any other species without due process, is unwarranted and infringes on our rights to engage in an activity that we enjoy and that poses no threat to the environment. The proposed exclusion from NEPA just adds insult to injury in denying American citizens the due process the law affords to challenge the impact of the proposed rule.

As a citizen of America, the land of the free, my freedom to own reptiles as pets has been under attack for several years. These attacks have caused great hardship to myself, my family, my friends who own reptile-related businesses and the economy of the United States. By allowing this rule, the FWS would have overreaching power to severely affect the pet reptile community further. I implore you to not allow this exclusion as it is only one more step toward destroying a \$1.4 billion industry and my freedom to enjoy my beloved pet reptiles, along with nearly five million other families.

Sincerely,