

**TESTIMONY OF TODD WILLENS, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE AND PARKS, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE AND OCEANS, REGARDING U.S.
PREPARATIONS FOR THE 14TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN
ENDANGERED SPECIES (CITES)**

MAY 3, 2007

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today regarding the Administration's preparation for the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP14) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which will take place in The Hague, the Netherlands, from June 3rd through June 15th.

With the recent addition of two new Parties, Montenegro and the Solomon Islands, CITES is a treaty with 171 member countries. The steady rise in membership in the Convention continues the trend towards what we hope will eventually become universal international membership. Despite a challenging global environment since CoP13 in 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand, CITES remains one of the most influential and effective Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Its mandate of ensuring that species subject to international trade are properly conserved remains as relevant today – if not more so – as when CITES was signed in 1973, here in Washington, DC.

While CITES faces many significant challenges, the Convention is most certainly making significant progress at achieving its Strategic Vision goal of ensuring that “no species of wild fauna or flora becomes or remains subject to unsustainable exploitation because of international trade.” Of course, achieving this high standard is an ongoing process; the issues that competitively drive and restrict the international wildlife trade are a complex mix of biological, economic, developmental, and cultural pressures. The CITES Parties can rightfully trumpet many success stories. But there remains a sober and focused approach to dealing with lingering and resurgent problems, such as the illegal trade in tigers and elephant ivory. The CITES Parties continue to deal with new challenges, such as the complexities of managing and controlling trade in commercially important timber and marine species listed in Appendix II.

The lead responsibility within the United States for the implementation of CITES rests with the Secretary of the Interior, as specified in the Endangered Species Act (ESA), acting through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). In implementing the Convention, the Service works closely with the Departments of State, Commerce (National Marine Fisheries Service, in particular), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Agriculture (both the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the U.S. Forest Service), Homeland Security (U.S. Customs and Border Patrol), and Justice, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Office of the

U.S. Trade Representative, and the Office of the President's Council on Environmental Quality.

One of our greatest strengths in implementing CITES in the United States is the collaborative working relationship we have with the States. The productivity of this relationship is exemplified by the U.S. proposal submitted for CoP14 to remove the bobcat from CITES Appendix II. Additionally, since CoP13, the Service and States have worked cooperatively to add 13 native freshwater turtle species to Appendix III of CITES; this marks the first use of Appendix III by the United States and represents the flexibility that exists under CITES for dealing with trade in different species. In keeping with past practice, the States will provide a representative to serve as a member of our delegation to CoP14, which allows for direct consultation and input by the States into the Service's decision-making process for implementing CITES. This close cooperation with the States on wildlife trade issues is based on the recognition of the primary responsibility of the States in managing our native wildlife. Since beginning preparations for CoP14 in early 2006, the Service has also engaged in an extensive public consultation process, including public meetings, *Federal Register* notices, regular updates to its CITES webpage, and numerous informal consultations with interest groups. This will continue with briefings for non-governmental organizations and the press during CoP14 in The Hague.

While the Service considers the results of CoP13 to be quite positive, we have high hopes that the implementation of CITES can be strengthened at CoP14. As such, the United States has submitted a number of species proposals and documents for consideration at the meeting. The submissions reflect the public consultation process and consultations with the States and other Federal agencies already described, but also reflect input from the CITES Secretariat, foreign governments, and CITES' permanent committees. The species proposals, outlined in greater detail below, include: removal of the bobcat from Appendix II (prepared in consultation with our State wildlife agency colleagues); inclusion of sawfishes in Appendix I (prepared in consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service); and inclusion of all red and pink coral species in Appendix II (prepared in consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service and co-sponsored by Kenya and Nicaragua). The United States has also submitted proposals to reclassify or remove from the CITES Appendices three native plants species – Arizona agave, Oconee bells, and Dehesa bear-grass – which are not currently affected by international trade; to include the Banggai cardinalfish, a marine species from Indonesia heavily exploited for the aquarium trade, in Appendix II; and to modify the technical annotation covering hybrids and cultivars of the Japanese yew, already listed in Appendix II, to alleviate the regulatory burden on the pharmaceutical and horticultural industries that trade in these plants and their products.

Since CoP13, we have actively participated in a wide variety of CITES activities, including meetings of the Animals, Plants, and Standing Committees, and ad hoc working groups technical, legal, and policy issues. We have engaged in a wide variety of consultations with the CITES Secretariat, foreign governments, and non-governmental organizations and the general public. The Service works closely with our CITES

colleagues in Canada and Mexico to ensure that the perspective of the United States is formally represented in committee meetings in which our three countries represent the CITES North America Region.

The Service has been involved in a number of issues aimed at advancing the work of the Convention including: negotiation of a working definition for “Introduction from the Sea”; implementation of the ramin timber listing in Appendix II; development of standards for the implementation of export quotas for Appendix-II species; refinement of exemptions for personal and household effects of listed species; and discussion of technical matters to improve the uniformity and acceptance of CITES permits and certificates. The United States has also participated in a working group to ensure that the guidelines being developed for compliance with the Convention are descriptive, rather than prescriptive, as we believe the existing compliance mechanisms in CITES are effective and appropriate. We are hopeful that these guidelines will be completed at CoP14.

The remainder of my statement will address some of the high-profile species and implementation proposals to be considered at CoP14.

Budget and Finance

The CITES Secretariat has presented the Parties with a new activity-based budget format for the years 2009-2011. The proposed budget lists all ongoing and proposed activities of the Secretariat, including its basic responsibilities dictated by the Convention as well as additional activities assigned to the Secretariat by the Parties. The Secretariat proposes that the Parties evaluate all of these activities and projects and decide on funding priorities. The Secretary General has indicated his belief that this process will bring greater transparency to the CITES budget and allow the Parties to select priorities for funding. Resource constraints and other considerations make it highly unlikely that the Parties will fund all of the listed activities. To do so would require a massive increase in the Parties’ voluntary contributions to the CITES Trust Fund – doubling them by 2011.

We are concerned that the Secretary General’s budget, as currently presented, does not present a sufficient level of detail for the Parties to understand what’s been presented and make sound decisions at CoP14. We intend to make clear prior to and at CoP14 that additional information is required from the Secretariat to evaluate its budget proposal. We anticipate proposing mechanisms to increase oversight over the budget process by the Parties. Towards this end, we are currently soliciting positions of other CITES Parties via diplomatic channels. As the United States is by far the single largest contributor to the budget of CITES – accounting for 22% of the assessed contributions – we intend to be vigilant in observing and insisting on accountability in the finances of the Convention.

Strategic Plan

At COP13 the Standing Committee was tasked with revising and updating the CITES Strategic Plan and accompanying Action Plan, which is the yardstick to measure

implementation of the Strategic Plan. The previous versions of these documents were prepared under the leadership of the United States as the immediate past Chair of the Standing Committee. The United States does not support the adoption of the new Standing Committee's proposed revisions to the Strategic Plan, as we believe they would significantly alter the focus and direction of CITES, and do not adhere to its core purposes and functions as it has been understood and implemented for over 30 years.

We are concerned that the revisions would cause CITES to stray from its core mission and intrude on the work of other multilateral agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Millennium Goals and the recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. While these are notable agreements with important missions, the purpose of CITES is discrete and the implementation of the Convention would be negatively affected if significant resources are diverted to non-CITES initiatives. The United States believes that CITES needs to remain focused on its core mission by improving the national capacity of Parties to implement the terms and intent of the Convention; we do not support a blurring of this focus.

The United States supports a careful and considered evolution of the implementation and enforcement of the Convention to meet the changing circumstances of the world since CITES was signed in 1973. We will insist that an inclusive and deliberate dialogue take place towards this objective.

Tigers

CITES has a long history of attempting to control the illegal trade in tigers and their body parts and derivatives. The United States has been at the forefront of these discussions. At the 54th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee in October 2006, the United States submitted a strong document on the illegal trade in tigers, partly as a result of alarming reports of a significant increase in the illegal trade in tiger parts and indications that China intends to loosen its domestic controls over commercial trade in tiger bone. This document called for the Standing Committee to set parameters to measure the progress of tiger range States, determine whether to recommend a suspension of commercial trade in CITES specimens from those Parties that have not made sufficient progress in combating the illegal trade in tigers, and organize diplomatic missions to those countries to encourage the political will and action needed to stop the illegal killing and trade in tigers.

Although the United States submitted this document to the Standing Committee, we are not currently a member of the Committee and we were unable to marshal sufficient support for our recommendations from the Party countries which are members. Both China and India spoke against the U.S. document, and other key Parties expressed differing views on what steps the Standing Committee should take on tigers. As a result of this lack of consensus, the topic was deferred to COP14.

We hoped for a strong document on illegal trade in tigers and other Asian big cats from the CITES Secretariat for CoP14, but that has not materialized. The Secretariat has declined to put forward specific recommendations for action by the Conference of the Parties. As we head into CoP14, we are faced with a difficult situation regarding tiger conservation and the control of illegal trade. It will be incumbent upon the Parties to devise a broadly supported plan for immediate action to address the tiger trade problem. Reports from a recent meeting of the Global Tiger Forum where China was well represented confirmed suspicions that China is seriously considering lifting its domestic ban on trade in tiger parts. Authorizing such trade would create a legal market for the tiger farms that already exist in China, but more importantly, would provide a cover for poached tiger products to enter the market. We expect that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will be vocal on the crisis facing wild tigers, particularly the issues of tiger farming to supply domestic trade, the use of tiger bones and other parts in traditional medicines, the production of tiger wine, and the unabated poaching of tigers in India. The United States believes strongly that poaching and illegal trade of wild tigers will be stimulated by any authorized trade in parts and products coming from farmed tigers. China's 1993 domestic ban has been lauded as highly successful by the international community addressing wild tiger conservation through CITES and other fora. We welcome the progress China has made in combating illegal tiger trade, and we support China's maintenance of its strict ban on the domestic trade in tiger parts. We believe maintaining the domestic ban on tiger bone trade, and strengthening enforcement efforts in India and other range States, is in the best interest of wild tiger populations. Prior to and at CoP14 the United States will stay fully engaged in any discussions on this matter and continue to advocate for conservation of wild tiger populations and the elimination of the illegal killing of tigers and trade in tiger parts.

Elephants

There will be three African elephant species proposals on the agenda of CoP14. A proposal submitted by Botswana and Namibia would maintain the populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe in Appendix II and establish annual export quotas for the export of raw ivory. The ivory would be exported to trading partners that have been certified by the Secretariat, in consultation with the Standing Committee, and the proceeds of the sale would be used exclusively for elephant conservation and community development programs.

Botswana has separately proposed amending the annotation for its elephant population to allow the trade in live animals and leather goods for commercial purposes. Botswana also proposes that it be allowed to export a maximum of 20,000 kg of ivory in a single shipment under strict supervision of the Secretariat. The proceeds of the sale would be used exclusively for elephant conservation and community conservation and development programs within or adjacent to the elephant's range. The proposed annotation would allow for both immediate "one-off" and annual sales of registered stocks of raw ivory for commercial purposes.

The U.S. has not supported annual export quotas for ivory previously, but did support

one-off sales of registered stocks from Namibia, South Africa, and Botswana on the condition that a system for the monitoring of illegal killing of African elephants was first established. The one-off ivory sale approved at CoP12 has not yet occurred because, as of the last meeting of the Standing Committee (October 2006), the conditions for a sale had not been met. These conditions include requiring countries involved in the sale to have adequate national legislation and domestic trade controls to prevent re-export of ivory from such a sale, and completion of MIKE (Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants) baseline data on elephant populations range wide. Since the October 2006 Standing Committee meeting, the Secretariat has confirmed that all the conditions required have been met (completion of the baseline data being the final achievement) and the decision to authorize the one-off sale will go before the Standing Committee at its 55th meeting, immediately prior to the start of CoP14. The MIKE mechanism was established to evaluate the effect of an individual sale on levels of elephant poaching. The approval of annual quotas or any other additional ivory sales after CoP14, other than the one-off sale approved at CoP12, at this time may be premature until two key issues can be addressed. First, a question remains as to whether additional recurring sales undermine the ability of MIKE to detect the impact of any one sale. Second, information is needed on the impact of the one-off sale already authorized. If any pending sale were to stimulate a significant increase in poaching or increased trafficking of illegal ivory, it is likely that the U.S. would have to object to like future sales.

We also have questions about the inclusion of Zimbabwe in this annual quota proposal. We are concerned by reports of increased poaching and complacency in elephant protection by the government. The Elephant Trade and Information System (ETIS) and MIKE reports may help address our concerns.

The third African elephant species proposal was submitted by Kenya and Mali, and would amend the annotations of the populations of Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa to prohibit trade in raw or worked ivory for 20 years except for hunting trophies for non-commercial purposes, the one-off sale agreed upon at CoP12, and the trade in Namibian ekipas (ivory trinkets) for non-commercial purposes. It also revokes Zimbabwe's annotation to sell ivory carvings for non-commercial purposes. We and the Secretariat note that imposing a 20-year ban on ivory trade, and thus pre-empting future proposals for such trade, appears to violate Article XV of CITES, which allows any Party to propose amendments to the Appendices of the Convention for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

All of these issues will be discussed at an African Elephant Range States Dialogue meeting just prior to CoP14 and the United States intends to await the outcome of deliberations by the range countries before finalizing our negotiating position on these proposals. The United States is in the process of seeking permission to attend this meeting as an observer, as we have done in the past.

Bobcat

The bobcat is the most widely distributed native cat species in North America, ranging from as far north as central British Columbia and south to Oaxaca, Mexico. Currently, with the exception of Delaware, the bobcat can be found in all the contiguous 48 United States. Within the United States, the States manage bobcat harvests to ensure long-term sustainable use of the species and to support its conservation. Bobcat management programs in the United States and Canada are among the most advanced management programs for commercial exploitation of feline furbearers. Between 1980 and 2004, the United States exported or re-exported 724,830 bobcat items. Although the bobcat is harvested for its fur in large numbers, monitoring of populations since 1977 continues to demonstrate its sustainable use; populations are stable or increasing in the United States and Canada, and estimates place bobcat numbers at a million or more animals in the United States alone.

In collaboration with our State partners, we developed and submitted a proposal to remove the bobcat from Appendix II of CITES. The bobcat was listed in CITES Appendix II, along with most wild cat species, on February 4, 1977. In 1983, at the fourth meeting of the COP, the Parties reviewed this species, along with other furbearer species, and agreed that this species is included in Appendix II because of similarity in appearance of its pelts (and products manufactured from those pelts) to those of other small cat species listed in Appendix I or II. We determined at that time that the bobcat, with the exception of a Mexican bobcat subspecies, did not qualify for inclusion in CITES Appendix II based on its own conservation status but rather due to its similarity to other small cat species. Species identified as being potential look-alikes to bobcat include the Canada lynx, Eurasian lynx, and Spanish lynx, with the latter two generating the most concern among CITES Parties.

Our recent review of the best available information, including a report on trade in *Lynx* species that we had contracted to TRAFFIC North America, concluded that bobcat skins should not present a look-alike problem to CITES Parties, thereby justifying its removal from CITES. Although identification of skin pieces is problematic, the majority of trade in *Lynx* species consists of full skins. Since skins are almost always auctioned as dry skins with fur out and usually complete, including the bobcat's distinguishing features on the ears and tail, identification of skins is straightforward. Further, there does not appear to be an incentive for trading in furs of other *Lynx* species of concern and passing them off as bobcats. Illegal trade has not been a problem, and fur industry representatives believe the market prefers bobcat skins over Eurasian and Spanish lynx species.

Whales

Unlike previous meetings of the Conferences of the Parties, there are no proposals before CoP14 to change the listing status of any cetacean species. However, Japan has submitted a document "Conservation of and control of trade in cetaceans." This contains a draft decision that, if adopted, would direct the Animals Committee to include in its Review of the Appendices all cetaceans in Appendix I that are coincidentally managed by

the International Whaling Commission (IWC). It would also direct the CITES Secretariat to write to the IWC Secretariat conveying “the concern of the Conference of the Parties regarding the postponement of the Revised Management Scheme discussions.” Japan states that the IWC has taken a decision that the moratorium on commercial whaling is no longer required. In fact, the commercial whaling moratorium remains in place as a significant number of IWC Parties refuse to lift it for a variety of reasons. Since the establishment of its moratorium on global whaling, coupled with the CITES Appendix-I listings, the IWC has continued to work on activities that the United States believes must be completed before commercial whaling can be considered. Therefore, we do not support the proposed message from the CITES Secretariat admonishing the IWC for failing to complete the Revised Management Scheme (RMS). Regarding a review of the biological status of listed whale species, it is doubtful that such a review would result in a listing change for any species due to the precautionary measures adopted by the CITES Parties for such decisions in CITES Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP13), and particularly given the ongoing deliberations of the IWC pertaining to the Revised Management Scheme (RMS) that would ensure that any harvest would be sustainable harvest.

Other Marine Species

A number of proposals reflect the continuing concern of the CITES Parties over the status of heavily exploited marine species. Among proposed marine species listings, the proposal of the United States to list sawfishes in Appendix I would have beneficial effects for wild populations in the United States and worldwide by preventing the international trade in their two most valuable products, the rostra and fins, and preventing unregulated trade in live animals other than as permitted under Article III of CITES. It is already illegal to land sawfish on all U.S. coasts under the ESA.

The United States is proposing to list all 26 species of pink and red corals in Appendix II of CITES. These species, valued for jewelry, are vulnerable to extirpation due to a variety of factors. Data demonstrates the “boom-and-bust” nature of many fisheries, with rapid increases in harvest once new populations are discovered, followed by over-exploitation within 4-5 years. There are reports of extirpations of these coral species in the Mediterranean, and most remaining extant populations globally are characterized by small, non-reproductive colonies. The United States is a major importer of red and pink coral jewelry. While the Department will continue work with our Coral Reef Task Force partners to provide assistance to coral reef countries to address adverse impacts from international trade, such as strengthening capacity to develop and implement sustainable management plans, enforcing relevant laws and regulations, and developing environmentally sound collection practices and alternatives, we believe that listing in Appendix II will better enable us to monitor trade in these coral species.

Proposed listings of shark species have figured prominently at recent meetings of the CITES Conference of the Parties, and CoP14 will be no exception. Germany, on behalf of the European Community, has proposed to list two shark species, the spiny dogfish and porbeagle, in Appendix II, each with an 18-month delay in the effective date of the listing to allow implementation issues to be worked out. The United States is currently

evaluating a number of factors in considering whether to support the proposals. The proposals cite life history, vulnerability to over-exploitation, inadequate fisheries management, and over-fishing as supporting reasons for adoption of these proposals. The two shark proposals both call for the listing of each species throughout their geographic ranges. With respect to the spiny dogfish, it is apparent that the Northeast Atlantic stock, near Europe, has suffered a significant decline, but a number of other global stocks are currently stable. There are currently both Federal and interstate fishery management plans for spiny dogfish in the United States. The proponent also indicates that population declines in several Northern Hemisphere stocks, combined with high market demand, are driving fishing pressure on other stocks that are now beginning to supply international markets. With respect to the porbeagle shark, both the United States and Canada actively manage the species to reduce fishing pressure. In considering the EU's proposal we are evaluating, among other things, data concerning the extent to which international trade is a driving factor leading to the over-fished status of this species is preventing rebuilding of stocks and whether it is possible to distinguish porbeagle sharks in trade from other species of sharks. The Service and NMFS are cooperatively evaluating both proposals to arrive at a final U.S. position. In addition to considering several shark species listing proposals, CoP14 will consider broad-ranging recommendations to improve the implementation of conservation measures for sharks under CITES.

Timber

To foster greater cooperation in the conservation and trade management of timber species in international trade, the Service and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative have cooperated in the submission of a document on the relationship between CITES and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). Through this document, the United States proposes a draft Resolution to galvanize the relationship between the two organizations. The CITES Secretariat has offered the opinion that this process could be advanced by the negotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding between CITES and the ITTO, and we expect to consult with other CITES Parties, the Chair of the Plants Committee, and the Secretariat on this matter at CoP14 to develop a final negotiating position.

There are also a number of timber species proposed for inclusion in Appendix II at CoP14. Germany, on behalf of the Member States of the European Community, has proposed nine species for inclusion in Appendix II. Germany has proposed the tropical timber species Spanish cedar, and all other species in the genus *Cedrela* (an estimated six species), for inclusion in Appendix II. Spanish cedar is being exploited at what some scientists and non-governmental organizations believe is an unsustainable rate, exacerbated by illegal logging and deforestation. In 2001, Peru and Colombia included their populations of Spanish cedar in Appendix III. Since this listing, exports of logs from Peru to the United States have increased. The listing of bigleaf mahogany in Appendix II in 2003 may be a factor in the observed increase of Spanish cedar exports from Peru.

Two other proposals submitted by Germany are for the inclusion of three species of rosewood (Nicaraguan rosewood and granadillo, the latter for look-alike reasons, and Honduran rosewood) in Appendix II. The three tree species occur in Central America and Mexico. The United States imports rosewood, which is used primarily for the production of musical instruments.

We are evaluating these three timber proposals to determine if they meet the requirements for inclusion in Appendix II, and in particular whether the inclusion of Spanish cedar in Appendix II would be more effective than the current Appendix-III listing for ensuring the sustainable use of this timber species. The positions of range states on these proposals is critical to the development of our own position, and therefore we are currently communicating with them on these proposals to determine how we can best work cooperatively for the conservation and sustainable use of these species. We are also evaluating the implementation challenges that may be associated with these additional timber species and considering the lessons learned from our experience with the listing of bigleaf mahogany.

Brazil has proposed the inclusion of its national tree, pernambuco, in Appendix II, including all parts and derivatives. Pernambuco is the primary wood used to make fine bows for stringed musical instruments, for which there is no other known wood substitute. Although Brazil has strict national controls in place that regulate the use of this timber species, the species and its Atlantic Forest habitat remain poorly protected, and enforcement of environmental laws is constrained by the availability of financial and human resources. Bow makers and musicians worldwide are concerned about the conservation and sustainable use of existing stocks of pernambuco. Several entities (e.g., the International Pernambuco Conservation Initiative) are actively working in Brazil to promote the sustainable harvest of pernambuco.

The listing of pernambuco in Appendix II would support the efforts undertaken by the Brazilian Government to ensure that trade is both legal and sustainable by requiring specimens in trade to have CITES permits. However, given the number of existing bows worldwide, a listing of the species that includes all parts and derivatives may be overly burdensome on traveling musicians without providing substantial conservation benefit. Therefore, in addition to determining our position on whether to list the species, we will be considering potential amendments that we may propose at CoP14 for exempting certain parts and products of the species from CITES controls. We will work with Brazil and other Parties on this proposal to promote the conservation of this species while avoiding unnecessary constraints on products already in trade.

Other Technical Issues

The United States has also submitted two technical documents to CoP14. One of these concerns the standardization of the use of purpose codes on CITES documents, which describe the reason for which the trade in specific specimens has been authorized by a CITES permit or certificate (such as commercial trade or movement of a pet). The other technical document submitted by the United States recommends an evaluation of the

effectiveness and utility of the current security tag system for crocodilian hides traded under the CITES permitting system. The crocodilian tagging system, which is used to monitor and control the trade in American alligator skins, is 12 years old. We believe it is time for the CITES Parties to ask whether the system continues to serve the role for which it was designed, and whether there are more cost effective, secure methods that can be employed to regulate this fine example of sustainable trade – one of CITES’ true success stories.

In closing Madame Chairwoman, I would like to thank the Subcommittee Members and your staff for your continuing support of the conservation and protection of threatened and endangered species throughout the world. We greatly appreciate this Subcommittee’s continued interest in CITES. We look forward to reporting back to the Subcommittee on the outcomes of the upcoming CoP14. This concludes my written testimony, and I would be pleased to answer any questions Members may have about CITES implementation in the United States and our preparations for CoP14.