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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0916
November 22, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. President,

We respectfully request that you direct the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to release a long-standing proposal by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list nine species of large constrictor snakes as prohibited "injurious species" under 18 USC § 42 better known as the Lacey Act. The nine snakes we are seeking to have listed are the Burmese python, northern African python, southern African python, reticulated python, green anaconda, yellow anaconda, Beni or Bolivian python, DeSchauensee's anaconda, and boa constrictor. Time is of the essence and this rule needs to be finalized immediately.

South Florida has been invaded by non-native wildlife, which disturbs our fragile ecosystem and preys on native species. The Burmese Python is one of the most dangerous examples of a non-native predator that has established a thriving breeding population in Florida. It preys on native wildlife, many of which are threatened or endangered. In addition to the safety threats and havoc the snakes are inflicting, there is a very real economic impact of their invasion. We are spending billions of dollars to restore the Everglades and if additional invasive snakes are allowed to establish themselves, the native wildlife will be decimated. Our local water management district, the State of Florida, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Everglades National Park have already dedicated time and resources to eradicating these invasive snakes. Their funding and ability to continue eradication programs, while still performing their core missions, would be unsustainable.

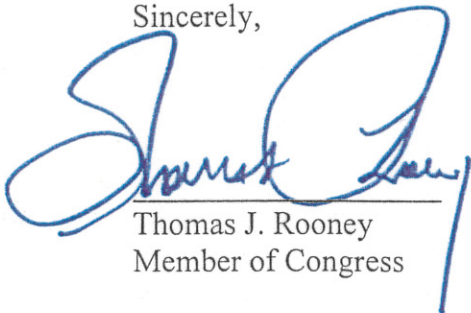
Unfortunately, the threat these snakes pose goes beyond our environment and wildlife. There have been numerous preventable human deaths and injuries caused by large constrictor snakes that are kept in captivity. These are dangerous predators that are not domesticated pets; they can grow to over 20 feet in length and weigh over one hundred pounds. They are aggressive hunters and unfortunately we have all seen the news of preventable deaths of both children and adults caused by these snakes.

After five years of study, preparation and analysis, the proposed rule would prohibit the private importation of these nine deadly snakes and remove them from interstate commerce. Listing the snakes will allow for the continued use for display, research and educational purposes with a Fish and Wildlife Service permit.

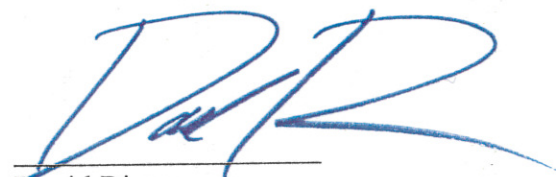
The threat of further introduction and establishment only increases the longer we await the listing. In 2009, three years after the rulemaking was initiated, evidence began to surface that the northern African rock python was establishing in South Florida. State and Federal agencies are already working with limited resources to control the existing populations. By listing the nine species we can begin to tackle the problem from the source of introduction.

In accordance with all applicable rules and regulations, we urge OMB to promptly release USFWS's proposed rule on large constrictor snakes. Thank you for your kind consideration and we look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



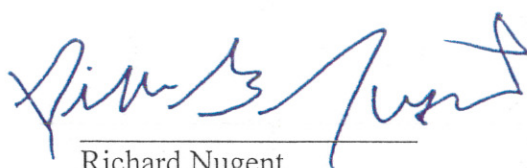
Thomas J. Rooney
Member of Congress



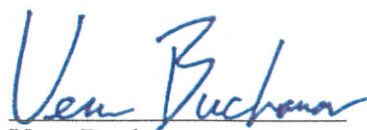
David Rivera
Member of Congress



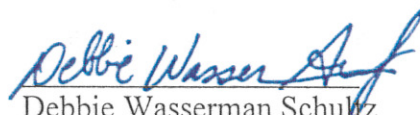
Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



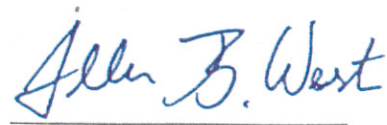
Richard Nugent
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



Allen West
Member of Congress