

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 15, 2003

International Conservation Caucus Launched!

To waste, to destroy, our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed.

--Theodore Roosevelt, Message to Congress, December 3, 1907--

Dear Colleague:

Alarming, many of the most environmentally unique and sensitive areas in the world are being destroyed. Take one example. It is estimated that the forests of the Congo Basin in Central Africa are disappearing at the rate of twice the size of Rhode Island each and every year, falling victim to intensifying and unsustainable logging. Consequently, rare and endangered wildlife in the region --including the western lowland gorilla, chimpanzee, and other rare species -- are being lost.

The people of Central Africa and elsewhere are paying the price for this logging. The forests of the Congo Basin, the Amazon Basin, and elsewhere play a critical role in sustaining the environment: absorbing carbon dioxide, cleansing water, and holding soil. If current deforestation and wildlife depletion rates are not reversed in these regions, their peoples, Americans, and indeed the world will pay an incalculable environmental, economic, social and cultural price.

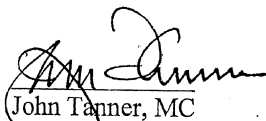
The U.S. has a long and proud history of conserving its natural heritage, which includes the creation of the world's first national park system. Initiatives such as the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) --a multinational effort to support a network of national parks, protected areas, and well-managed forestry concessions-- launched by Secretary of State Powell last year reflect the fact that the U.S. has the interest, expertise and commitment to address conservation challenges worldwide.

We are launching the International Conservation Caucus [Charter on back] with the aim of supporting the CBFP and other international conservation efforts. If you would like to join the Caucus, or receive additional information, please contact Edward Burrier (Royce - 54111) or Kathy Becker (Tanner - 54714).

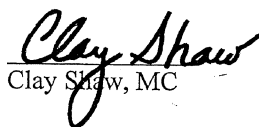
Sincerely,



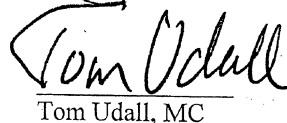
Ed Royce, MC



John Tanner, MC



Clay Shaw, MC



Tom Udall, MC