



February 25, 2019

Representative Pramila Jayapal
1510 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: H.R. 919 – The Bird-Safe Building Act of 2019

Dear Representative Jayapal,

Greetings from Seattle Audubon, Washington State's oldest conservation organization. We are one of the largest and most active Audubon chapters in the country, leading a local community over 4,000 strong in appreciating, understanding, and protecting birds and their natural habitats. I write to you today on behalf of those members to urge you to co-sponsor H.R. 919 – the Bird-Safe Buildings Act of 2019.

Each year, around one billion birds in North America meet their end on a pane of glass. It's hard to imagine that scale of destruction, especially since the problem is largely hidden. We may hear the occasional thud of a bird striking glass, but, more often than not, these deaths occur undetected; the corpses are quickly carried away by rodents and other scavengers.

The problem is that, generally speaking, birds behave as if clear and reflective panes are invisible to them. Any time both birds and windows are present, fatal collisions can occur. Collisions happen in all seasons, during almost all weather conditions, day and night. This puts windows among the very worst human-related impacts that directly kill birds. Deaths due to window collisions are in addition to those caused by habitat loss, invasive species, and pollution. Windows are indiscriminate killers, affecting both fit and weak individuals, male and female, old and young. This presents a challenge for imperiled species management: in Washington State, there are 37 bird species that are either federally or state listed as Endangered, Threatened, or of Special Conservation Concern. One out of four of these imperiled species are vulnerable to window collisions due to their migration patterns and life history characteristics. These include Lewis' Woodpeckers, Slender-billed White-breasted Nuthatches, and Northern Saw-whet Owls.

The good news is that these deaths can be prevented simply and cheaply. The American Bird Conservancy published a comprehensive document detailing bird-safe building materials and design features which significantly reduce window collisions. Their recommendations are well represented in the Bird-Safe Buildings Act. Your co-sponsorship of H.R. 919 will send a meaningful message to your large, conservation-minded constituency that you are aware of the window collision issue and are willing to act on it.

The scope of H.R. 919 is necessarily limited to public buildings owned and operated by the General Services Administration. However, passing H.R. 919 will set a precedent that can help

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avian conservationists collaborate with municipalities and development authorities to establish local and regional policy that would amplify the effect of the Bird-Safe Buildings Act.

Birds play important roles in ecosystems, from pest control to seed dispersal. They are also important culturally: bird-watching related activities contribute around \$4 billion to the economy each year. But our birds are at risk. In the time it took you to read this, approximately 4,500 birds in North America died from window collisions. This is needless and can be prevented. Supporting the Bird-Safe Buildings Act is a great place to start.

On behalf of more than 4,000 Seattle area members, we urge you to co-sponsor and support H.R. 919 and help make public buildings safer for birds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joshua N. Morris", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joshua N. Morris
Urban Conservation Manager
Seattle Audubon