

**Center for Biological Diversity *Friends of the Earth* Institute for Policy Studies—Climate Policy
Program * Public Citizen* Rainforest Action Network***

April 15, 2015

Dear Representative,

On behalf of our millions of members, activists, and supporters, we urge you to reject H.R. 1105, a bill to repeal the federal estate tax. This irresponsible measure would balloon the deficit, rob the government of much-needed revenue, and hand a giant tax break to the richest of the rich.

As organizations committed to protecting public health and the environment, we are compelled to highlight the connection between protecting the planet and adequately funding the government. From preserving our open spaces to preparing for the rising waters of climate disruption, it is clear that the environmental threats of the 21st century are collective problems that require robust government solutions. The most equitable way to fund these solutions is through taxes on polluting industries and the wealthy—including through an estate tax.

As the pointless pain of sequestration enters its fifth year, it is worth remembering that cuts to government spending translate directly into environmental harm. Funding for programs that protect biodiversity, lower carbon emissions, and protect our air and water has been among the hardest hit. And yet, repealing the estate tax would cause an estimated \$269 billion revenue shortfall over the next decade, thereby worsening our fiscal situation. This will be used inevitably to justify even further austerity against the programs and agencies that protect our environment.

Rather than repealing the estate tax, Congress should vote to expand it. In 2013 it led to the filing of only 4,687 estate tax returns and functioned effectively as a tax on the top 0.18 percent. Because it only affects individuals leaving behind more than \$5.4 million and married couples leaving behind more than \$10.8 million it remains a fair hedge against the concentration of wealth.

Asking individuals fortunate enough to inherit vast sums to pay their fair share is far from unreasonable given the gravity of our environmental challenges. We thank you for your consideration and urge you once again to vote down H.R.1105.

Sincerely,

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