

Ashley Judd oral testimony – April 23, 2009

Mister Chairman, Ranking Member and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am Ashley Judd, actress and strong conservation advocate, also appearing on behalf of Defenders of Wildlife. I am very pleased to testify before you and this subcommittee.

As you may have already deduced, unlike Jeff, I am not a scientist. I do not pretend to be an expert on matters of conservation. I am, however, an American who greatly loves and is deeply proud of our vast, varied land.

I have on my "Bucket List" to visit every National Park (and am well on my way to fulfilling this); I dream of hiking the whole of the Appalachian trail; and my idea of blissful quiet time with my husband is hours spent knee to waist deep in creeks, working on stream mitigation projects on our Tennessee farm.

I have more pictures of us bent over cleaning our creek beds than I do of us standing up straight!

I am serious about restoring the natural habitats on our farm. A short list of my recent projects involves planting over 1,000 native species of trees including two bio-diverse orchards and starting bee hives to help off-set colony collapse in our area. We take great care to create ideal conditions for wildlife.

I had the good fortune to grow up in three states– Kentucky, Tennessee and California – that are blessed with stunning, diverse and productive landscapes. Those landscapes have shaped my life and my values, and I am deeply worried that in an era of global warming; evidence of which we experience on our own farm; future generations of Americans will have fewer natural resources to draw upon than do we, and their opportunities will therefore be less than our own.

Some would have us believe that protecting the environment is a luxury, one that should be put aside in these tough economic times. But that is short sighted. Certainly none of us here today would consider clean water and air, abundant fisheries, healthy forests, and safe places to call home a luxury. As President Obama himself has said, “With smart policies, we can grow our economy today and preserve the environment for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren.”

I thank you for the steps you have taken to date to address the impacts of global warming on our nation, particularly the formation of the federal global warming science center that will direct the new administration to develop a comprehensive national strategy to save wildlife and natural resources during this era of global warming.

Adequately addressing the greatest conservation challenge of our time will require long term investments that can only be realized through a new dedicated funding stream.

That is why I am here on Capitol Hill today to call on Congress to dedicate five percent of the revenue from new global warming cap and trade legislation to safeguard wildlife and

ecosystems from a warming world. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your support on this issue.

All of us will need to work together to address the overwhelming impacts of global warming on wildlife and our precious natural heritage. That means the federal government will have to work hand in hand with the states, tribes and others, and ensure that there are appropriate funding resources for state and tribal wildlife grant programs. Besides being a proud Hillbilly, I am part Native American. Empowering my ancestral tribe and others as well as the states will allow us all to do a better job of protecting our proud conservation heritage.

In closing, I ask you to commit five percent of the revenue from new global warming cap and trade legislation to safeguard wildlife and ecosystems from a warming world. I cannot imagine anything more important to the legacy we leave to future generations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.