



## Press Release

### **Help save India's national animal, the wild tiger, by petitioning US lawmakers to pass an important upcoming Bill**

San Antonio, TX (8 June 2020) – An [online petition](#) needs signatures of people from India, and asks US lawmakers to pass a Bill in the US Congress that will help protect the tiger in its natural habitat. This petition will be presented to national leaders in Washington D.C.

Tigers are bred in captivity and farmed around the world in commercial operations to the detriment of wild tigers. It may appear that breeding of captive tigers might help save tigers and release poaching pressure on wild tigers. However, in practice, the opposite is true.

Bittu Sahgal, the founder of the Indian-based organizations [Sanctuary Asia](#) and [Sanctuary Nature Foundation](#), explains that “captive bred tigers in the US are mostly held in commercial operations and are not valuable to conservation. In addition, captive tiger parts around the world have supplied the illegal wildlife trade and increase the demand for tiger parts. Tigers bred in the US that enter the illegal trade could be stimulating the poaching of wild tigers from India.”

There are less than 3,000 wild tigers left in India, the most of any country in the world, while there are an estimated 5,000 - 10,000 captive tigers in the US. There is currently no federal law in the US that prohibits or regulates breeding or private ownership of tigers. This year, the US Congress will vote on passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act. If adopted, it would ban pet tiger ownership and public cub handling, which is driving tiger breeding in the US. Securing a future for wild tigers involves addressing commercial breeding and private ownership of tigers around the world.

An [online petition](#), ‘Indians against illegitimate tiger breeding and ownership in the US’, aims to gather at least 4,000 signatures of people from India who support the passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act. The petition will be presented to elected officials in the US House of Representative and Senate.

Bittu adds, “The US tiger crisis needs to be addressed. It is important that people from India show their support for the Big Cat Public Safety Act by signing this online petition.”

Sarika Khanwilkar, the petitioner, explains, “Until now, the voices of people from tiger range countries were absent from discussions about the US tiger crisis. Tigers are India's national animal and natural heritage. People from India have a right to be heard on issues related to commercial breeding of tigers that received worldwide attention through the recent Netflix reality TV series ‘Tiger King’, particularly because this activity encourages poaching. I am urging people from India, the country with the highest number of wild tigers in the world, to sign this online petition and help me pressure the US Congress to adopt the Big Cat Public Safety Act as federal law.”

#### About Wild Tiger:

Wild Tiger is a US-based 501c3 non-profit whose mission is to conserve India's tigers and their habitats. Wild Tiger was founded by Sarika Khanwilkar, a US citizen, an Overseas Citizen of India, and a tiger conservationist who is a PhD researcher at Columbia University in New York City. Sarika has performed field research in central India for 5 years and was a 2019-2020 Fulbright Scholar in India. For more information, visit [www.wild-tiger.org](http://www.wild-tiger.org).

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