



SOCIETY OF VERTEBRATE PALEONTOLOGY

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Dr. John Holdren, Director
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Executive Office of the President
725 17th Street Room 5223
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Dr. Holdren:

On behalf of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP), I write to express strong support for the Natural Science Collections Alliance (NSC Alliance) proposed Executive Order for issuance by President Obama to promote the preservation and use of scientific collections.

Our nation's natural science collections, whether at a public museum, such as the Smithsonian, an independent or university-affiliated natural history museum, such as the Paleontological Research Institution (Ithaca, NY), or a science department at a liberal arts college, are irreplaceable resources that enable us to understand our world. These specimen and data collections are critical for interpreting the biological and physical history of earth, and are essential to our ability to understand how earth systems function today and how they may function in a rapidly changing world.

Founded in 1940 by thirty-four paleontologists, the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (<http://www.vertpaleo.org/>) now has over 2,500 members representing professionals, students, artists, preparators, and others interested in vertebrate paleontology. It is organized exclusively for educational and scientific purposes, with the object of advancing the science of vertebrate paleontology. The Society publishes the *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*, the leading scholarly journal in the field for original research papers on fossil vertebrates, ranging from fish to dinosaurs to mammals. We are engaged in supporting science education at all levels, including K-12 students, undergraduate and graduate education, as well as through museums and the media. The field of vertebrate paleontology and the allied fields of evolutionary biology, comparative anatomy, and earth history use and depend on our nation's scientific collections of living and fossil vertebrates.

The proposed Executive Order sends a strong message to the natural science collections research and education community. In short, it would demonstrate that the Obama Administration is aware of the important role our institutions play in the nation's scientific research and education enterprise. Moreover, it would demonstrate that federal support and use of data from scientific collections have been hindered by inadequate coordination of planning and budgets. The Executive Order would establish a formal mechanism by which federal agencies could ensure wise and strategic investments in this important and irreplaceable part of our research infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration of the Executive Order proposed by the NSC Alliance. We urge your office to support adoption of this order.

Sincerely,

Blaire Van Valkenburgh
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