

[DATE]

[NAME]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY, STATE, ZIP]

Dear [NAME]:

I am writing to you today to express my concern about the effects that new development in [LOCATION NAME] will have on chimney swifts, a federally protected migratory bird species that breeds and migrates through this area each year.

Chimney swifts spend the winter in South America and come here in the spring to nest and raise young. These birds used to nest and roost in trees of old growth forests but have proven to be a very adaptable bird. Since much of that forest habitat is now gone, they rely on manmade structures almost exclusively. Like many species of birds, chimney swifts face a number of threats including habitat loss, declines in insect populations (their prey) due to pesticide use, and window collisions; as such, the chimney swift population has declined nearly 70% since 1970.

For swifts, the major causes of habitat loss are the demolition or capping of chimneys that the birds use for nesting and roosting. I understand that it can be somewhat alarming for building owners to learn that thousands of birds are coming to sleep in their chimneys at night, but the birds don't cause any damage, and are only there during the nighttime hours and for only a few months each year.

Every year in Alabama, several major roost chimneys are demolished or capped, and I am concerned that chimney swifts will continue to lose the important habitat features that they need to survive.

I hope you'll consider taking steps to preserve or replace threatened chimneys, to encourage developers to include swift-habitat-loss mitigation into their building plans, and to help concerned citizens like me get the word about these important birds. I also hope you'll reach out to experts at Alabama Audubon or the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for more information.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[YOUR EMAIL]

[YOUR STREET ADDRESS]

[YOUR CITY, STATE, ZIP]