

**“While IPAA supports protection of our most critical species on the brink of extinction, with only a two percent recovery rate, the Endangered Species Act is failing to achieve its fundamental purpose of species recovery. Instead, the ESA has become a legal tool for environmental organizations to halt economic growth and job creation, while diverting millions of American taxpayer dollars away from species recovery,”** Mallori Miller, Senior Director of Government Relations Independent Petroleum Association of America

9/24/19 Statement of Mallori Miller, Senior Director of Government Relations Independent Petroleum Association of America

Good Afternoon. I’m Mallori Miller with the Independent Petroleum Association of America. IPAA is a national trade association that represents thousands of independent oil and natural gas companies operating in 34 states in the U.S. Many of our member companies are small businesses that employ an average of 20 people. IPAA is dedicated to ensuring a strong, viable American oil and natural gas industry, recognizing that an adequate and secure supply of U.S. energy is essential to the national economy and energy security. I’d like to thank the Western Caucus for holding this roundtable discussion on ways to modernize the ESA – we are all here because we can agree on one thing, the current system is not working per the original intent of the law.

While IPAA supports protection of our most critical species on the brink of extinction, with only a two percent recovery rate, the Endangered Species Act is failing to achieve its fundamental purpose of species recovery. Instead, the ESA has become a legal tool for environmental organizations to halt economic growth and job creation, while diverting millions of American taxpayer dollars away from species recovery. Over the past few years, there have been numerous efforts in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Oklahoma, and elsewhere to list hundreds of species as endangered and place hundreds of thousands of acres of land off-limits to economic development.

This is particularly impactful to our member companies, many of whom are small family-owned businesses that operate and employ people in the communities where they live. These are not large companies that have the financial capacity to fight frivolous lawsuits or pick up and move their company to develop in another part of the country. Independent oil and natural gas producers have consistently been willing and committed partners in species and habitat conservation. These local businesses have proven it’s possible to balance a thoughtful, targeted conservation approach with energy and economic development – the very foundation for many small towns and local communities across the nation.

IPAA supports more transparency in the listing decisions, limiting the amount of taxpayer money spent on litigation, expanding the role for States, and ensuring that ecosystems and the species that occupy them are protected for future generations. Again, I’d like to thank the Western Caucus for shedding light on this very important issue.