



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

H.R. 1897 (Rep. Westerman), ESA Amendments Act of 2025

Topline Points

- The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is failing at its goal of recovering species so they no longer need protection, with only three percent of listed species being delisted over the last 50 years.
- From the listing process to the consultation process, the ESA Amendments Act makes targeted reforms to incentivize species recovery, eliminate unnecessary red tape, and provide consistent Congressional direction to agencies on how the ESA should be implemented.
- ESA reform is an essential part of permitting reform. The ESA Amendments Act would streamline the permitting process for important projects, without compromising species protections.

Background

The ESA was passed by Congress in 1973 with the noble goal of saving species on the brink of extinction and recovering them to the point where they no longer needed protection. Unfortunately, over its 50-plus-year history, the ESA has achieved an abysmal 3% recovery success rate and has become a blunt instrument used to restrict land use and projects essential to local economies. It is time for Congress to enact meaningful reforms to the ESA.

H.R. 1897 returns scientific integrity, common sense, and consensus to the process of listing species and designating critical habitat. The bill emphasizes recovery by establishing a pathway for state management and delisting, linking progress toward recovery goals with regulatory relief. By providing affected stakeholders with clear metrics to measure success and rewarding achievement with red tape reduction, the bill encourages private investment in species recovery. In addition, the bill provides certainty in the delisting process by prohibiting judicial review in the 5-year monitoring period post delisting, giving certainty that radical environmental groups can't undo years of successful recovery efforts in a courtroom.

H.R. 1897 streamlines the ESA permitting process by providing clear, consistent guidelines to ensure consultations focus on the project itself, not a litany of unrelated effects. The bill also codifies a definition of "best available science" to ensure that biased science cannot be called upon to justify unscientific ESA decision-making. In addition, the bill requires that any project modifications proposed by the federal government during an ESA consultation be appropriate for the underlying project, technically feasible, and minimize economic burden on the applicant.

H.R. 1897 will also prevent the federal government from using the ESA as a weapon to impose costly regulations without Congressional authorization, aligning the law with the Supreme Court's historic decision in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*.

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