

Statement of Ian Lyle
National Water Resources Association
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Chairman Gosar, members of the Western Caucus,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, I would also like to thank your staffs for their work putting this forum together. My name is Ian Lyle; I am the Executive Vice President of the National Water Resources Association, commonly known as NWRA.

We are a non-partisan, non-profit association that represents state water associations, and both agricultural and municipal water providers. Our members help provide water to more than 50 million people.

Every product from the food you eat each day to the smartphone in your pocket requires water. Water to grow, water to manufacture, and water to keep communities and families healthy.

Wise water management is fundamental for life, critical to our economy, and vital for the environment.

I, like everyone in this room, support the goals of the Endangered Species Act.

It is for that reason that we are here today. The Endangered Species Act can be improved to work better for both species and people.

America is blessed to have one of the most comprehensive water infrastructure systems the world has ever seen. The development and maintenance of this infrastructure can be directly affected by regulations like the Endangered Species Act.

Our nation faces significant water challenges. We must take steps to ensure a safe, reliable, and affordable supply water for future generations.

One of the key steps we can take is to improve the Endangered Species Act.

This can be done by:

- Focusing on species recovery
- Increasing transparency
- Using sound scientific tools and embracing technology
- Focusing on collaboration and state and local government engagement

Many of the bills we are discussing today are commons sense measures that embrace these ideas.

I offer two brief examples of how adherence to these principles can benefit all parties.

- In the San Juan and Colorado River Basins a focus on species recovery has led to improved populations of four ESA listed fish species while providing Section 7 ESA compliance for over 2,500 water projects providing water to cities, industry, farms and tribes.
- In Colorado, limited transparency forced Garfield County to go through litigation and a FOIA process in order to review data that designated massive portions of the county as critical habitat. Once the County was able to review data it realized it was sourced from a national data set that

did not reflect the highly varied local geography. The County was able to provide better data, which ultimately led to the adoption of policies that benefit the species. Greater transparency and collaboration with local governments will almost always benefit species.

Water supply in the west is critical to the U.S. and the entire world.

Food grown with western water is sent throughout the nation and around the world. Even here in Washington, DC it is not uncommon to look at a container of vegetables and discover it originated in a western state.

This agricultural contribution will become more important in coming years. Global food consumption is estimated to increase by 70 percent by 2050.

America will continue to play a leading role in feeding the world and driving its economy. But we can't do it without water; we can't do it without a regulatory system that works.

Improving the Endangered Species Act will help protect species and the water supplies that future generations depend on.

We can do better, we should do better and we must do better.

Chairman Gosar I think you for your leadership on this issue and the important dialogue it will create.