



Congressional Western Caucus: Pillars for Species Recovery

One of the major priorities of the Congressional Western Caucus is improving and modernizing the Endangered Species Act, which has a dismal success rate of only 3%. Instead of empowering states and local species managers to effectively protect and recover species, this landmark species protection law has been turned into a weapon used by extreme special interest groups and serial litigators to delay or halt agriculture, natural resource, and energy development throughout rural America.

During our second annual Species Week, Western Caucus Members are highlighting our solutions to promote commonsense ESA reforms needed to effectively recover species and allow rural communities to thrive. These solutions are based on three pillars of species recovery: Transparency, Flexibility, and Scientific Credibility.



ESA listing decisions can impact nearly every aspect of life for those in impacted areas, and the public deserves to know how these decisions were made. By increasing transparency around listing decisions, we can ensure these decisions are sound and more fully understand the impacts these decisions have on rural America.

Western Caucus Member Legislation:

- **Chairman Dan Newhouse (WA-04):** [Legislation](#) to codify the Trump Administration's Section 4 regulations that require the economic impact of an ESA listing to be considered
- **Rep. Paul Gosar (AZ-04):** [Legislation](#) to codify the Trump Administration's Section 7 regulations to ensure a timely, comprehensive consultation process for listing decisions
- **Vice Chair Yvette Herrell (NM-02):** [Legislation](#) to codify the Trump Administration's regulations on critical habitat designations and provide authority to exclude an area from designation if impacts outweigh the benefits
- **Rep. August Pfluger (TX-11):** [Listing Reform Act](#), requiring the Administration to analyze economic costs of an ESA listing
- **Rep. Jason Smith (MO-08):** [EMPOWERS Act](#), mandating federal agencies consider local stakeholders' input when making changes to the species listed under the ESA



A successful ESA depends on states and local conservationists having flexibility. Each state and each species' habitat is different, and it is species managers on the ground who know best how to protect populations and restore ecosystems – not the federal government. By providing flexibility to state management agencies, community groups, private landowners, and others with a vested interest in success, we can ensure the best pathway forward for threatened and endangered species.

Western Caucus Member Legislation:

- **Rep. Ken Buck (CO-04):** [Legislation](#) to codify the Trump Administration's elimination of the blanket 4(d) rule, maintaining different levels of protection for endangered vs. threatened species
- **Rep. Matt Rosendale (MT-AL):** [FIR Act](#), amending requirements for re-consultation in Forest Service plans when new information is found and allow for information to be incorporated into existing plans
- **Vice Chair Pete Stauber (MN-08):** [ESA Flexibility Act](#), granting leeway and flexibility for landowners when dealing with listed species



CONGRESSIONAL
WESTERN CAUCUS
SPECIES WEEK 2022

PILLARS OF SPECIES RECOVERY: **SCIENTIFIC CREDIBILITY**

*ENSURE THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT IS
BACKED BY THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE*

Listing decisions, critical habitat designations, and species management plans must be based on the best available science. Working to restore scientific credibility to the ESA seems like a commonsense effort, but over the past five decades, species provisions have been more reflective of political interests, rather than scientific evidence.

Western Caucus Member Legislation:

- **Rep. Cliff Bentz (OR-02):** [Legislation](#) to codify the Trump Administration's regulation requiring critical habitat to only include habitat that is critical to the survival of a listed species and [legislation](#) to codify the Trump Administration's critical habitat designation for the northern spotted owl
- **Vice Chair Lauren Boebert (CO-03) & Rep. Tom Tiffany (WI-07):** [Trust the Science Act](#), removing the gray wolf from the endangered species list based on the latest scientific review of populations in the lower 48 states
- **Vice Chair Andy Biggs (AZ-05):** [LIST Act](#), authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to delist a species when there is objective, measurable, and scientific study demonstrating the species has recovered
- **Vice Chair Liz Cheney (WY-AL):** [Grizzly Bear State Management Act](#), requiring the Administration to re-issue the delisting of the grizzly bear and prohibit judicial review of the decision