



July 10, 2018

The Honorable Paul Gosar, D.D.S. (AZ-04)
Chairman, Congressional Western Caucus
2057 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Gosar:

The Independent Petroleum Association of America writes to express its support for the nine bills included in the Congressional Western Caucus Endangered Species Act Modernization Package. IPAA believes both exploration and development of America's oil and natural gas resources and conservation can coexist through reasonable and balanced wildlife policy. This legislative package would aid in the modernization of the 1973 Endangered Species Act and benefit not only the regulated community, but further enhance protection of endangered plants and animals across the United States.

IPAA represents nearly 7,000 independent oil and gas explorers and producers that want to ensure species and their ecosystems are preserved for future generations. IPAA members are participants in federal, state and private efforts to project and conserve endangered or threatened species. More specifically, IPAA's members have enrolled millions of acres in conservation plans and committed tens of millions of dollars to fund habitat conservation and restoration programs.

The package includes many measures that would be of interest to IPAA. In particular, IPAA was engaged with a coalition to petition to delist the American Burying Beetle. The 12-month finding for this was due by August 8, 2016. Nearly two years later, no determination has been made. Congressman Biggs' LIST Act would also help create a mechanism to expedite this process so that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can better focus its recovery efforts on truly imperiled species. More broadly, IPAA has long recommended that its members engage in voluntary conservation efforts before a species is listed, but often times the mechanisms lack the teeth to adequately provide entities recognition for these efforts. Congressman Tipton's LOCAL Act, Congressman Johnson's WHOLE Act as well as Congressman Norman's PREDICTS Act would address these inadequacies. Additionally, IPAA members have often been baffled by some of the criteria used to make listing decisions and designate critical habitat. Congressman McClintock's Endangered Species Transparency and Reasonableness Act would let stakeholders and conservationists alike see what data is being used publicly online.

Thank you for introducing this important legislation and IPAA looks forward to working with you as these important bills moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

Barry Russell
President & CEO