



NATIONAL ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT
REFORM COALITION

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July 10, 2018

The Honorable Paul A. Gosar, DDS
Chairman
Congressional Western Caucus
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Western Caucus Endangered Species Act Legislative Rollout

Dear Chairman Gosar:

On behalf of the National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition (NESARC), I am writing to commend you and other members of the Western Caucus for the package of bills being introduced this week to improve the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and its implementation.

NESARC is the country's oldest broad-based, national coalition dedicated solely to achieving improvements to the ESA and its implementation. Our membership includes agricultural interests, cities and counties, commercial real estate developers, conservationists, electric utilities, energy producers, farmers, forest product companies, home builders, landowners, oil and gas companies, ranchers, realtors, water and irrigation districts, and other businesses and individuals throughout the United States. NESARC and its members are committed to promoting effective and balanced legislative and administrative improvements to the ESA that support the protection of fish, wildlife, and plant populations as well as responsible land, water, and resource management.

The bills being championed by you and your colleagues speak directly to the longstanding need to address problems with the ESA, a law that has not been substantively updated in nearly three decades. They would make significant improvements to the law that are critical to the success of the law's intent -- to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

The measures make updates to the ESA that are consistent with NESARC's underlying principles. For example:

- The "*Less Imprecision in Species Treatment (LIST) Act*" would require the delisting of species when objective, measurable scientific information demonstrates that a species is recovered.
- The "*Permit Reassurances Enabling Direct Improvements for Conservation, Tenants and Species (PREDICTS) Act*" would provide for greater certainty and improved planning for

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incidental take permit holders and landowners entering into agreements to improve the status and recovery of at-risk and listed species.

- The “*Ensuring Meaningful Petition Outreach While Enhancing Rights of States (EMPOWERS) Act*” would provide for greater involvement of State and local governments with regard to ESA petitions and decisions to list species.
- The “*Stop Takings on Reserves Antithetical to Germane Encapsulation (STORAGE) Act*” would ensure that certain areas impacted by operations of water storage and similar facilities are not designated as critical habitat.
- The “*Weigh Habitats Offsetting Locational Effects (WHOLE) Act*” would ensure that all species protections and conservation measures are considered in their totality when determining the likelihood of destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.
- The “*Land Ownership Collaboration Accelerates Life (LOCAL) Act*” would encourage voluntary conservation efforts and provide incentives for the preservation and recovery of imperiled species.
- The “*Localizing Authority of Management Plans (LAMP) Act*” would increase state and local involvement in species management through cooperative agreements.
- The “*Providing ESA Timing Improvements That Increase Opportunities for Nonlisting (PETITION) Act*” would address the longstanding issue of petition backlogs, which drain limited federal resources and result in unnecessary lawsuits.
- The “*Endangered Species Transparency and Reasonableness Act*” would increase transparency, enlist greater consultation by states, localities, and Indian tribes in species listings, and to reduce taxpayer-financed attorneys fees to help invest more funding in actual species recovery.

We thank you for your leadership on this important issue, and look forward to working with you and your staff as these bills move through the legislative process. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or NESARC’s Executive Director, Jordan Smith, with questions or whenever we may be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Yates", written in a cursive style.

Ryan R. Yates
Chairman