



Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary
700 E Broadway Avenue
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-2586 605/773-3265
FAX: 605/773-3921

August 22, 2018

The Honorable John Barrasso, Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: South Dakota Department of Transportation Support for the Endangered Species Act
Amendments of 2018

Dear Chairman Barrasso:

The draft amendments to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) now being considered by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee are a step forward. The ESA can significantly affect transportation projects when it is triggered. If the bill is enacted as proposed, it will improve project delivery, promote efficiency and safety, and still maintain proper environmental protections.

The proposed amendments create the opportunity for improved environmental results by modernizing and streamlining the ESA processes, promoting more state conservation agency involvement, increasing transparency, increasing the weight of information provided by state governments, and improving the engagement of areas and governments most impacted by ESA efforts.

We hope to work with you and the rest of the Congress on improving the approach to the ESA as the bill progresses.

Sincerely,

Darin Bergquist, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Transportation

Cc: Senator Rounds