



August 14, 2018

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

Dear Chairman Barrasso:

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on your discussion draft of the Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018. On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors, a national construction industry trade association with 70 chapters representing more than 21,000 chapter members, I am writing in support of the draft bill.

While the goals of the ESA are laudable, its current approach can impede critical construction projects as the law is increasingly used by anti-development groups to halt construction activities while doing little or nothing to ensure the protection of endangered species. ABC believes that your efforts to modernize the ESA can improve our conservation efforts and ensure a more collaborative process with stakeholders to protect U.S. wildlife.

This draft legislation would improve the ESA by providing regulatory certainty to the construction industry, which would allow economic and sociological impacts to be considered during the permitting process and the review of applications. The draft legislation would also strengthen conservation decision-making through greater use of scientific and commercial data.

ABC believes that the discussion draft's increased incentives for innovative federal, state, local and private efforts to conserve species will lead to a more effective recovery process that would not only ensure the protection of our threatened and endangered species but would also be beneficial to ABC members and the communities in which they work.

ABC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the discussion draft and applauds the Committee on Environment and Public Works for its work on this critical issue. We look forward to continuing to work with the committee to ensure the reauthorization and modernization of the ESA.

Sincerely,

Kristen Swearingen
Vice President of Legislative & Political Affairs