

June 7, 2018



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

Dear Chairman Barrasso,

On behalf of the Wyoming Wool Growers Association, we appreciate the opportunity to review the discussion draft of proposed legislation to modernize the Endangered Species Act. After careful review of the language we believe it accomplishes the goals of the bipartisan recommendations from the Western Governors Association and would benefit the ranchers and landowners our organization represents. We are pleased to offer our support for this legislation.

The draft legislation contains some key components that we believe are necessary in modernizing the ESA, including much needed benchmarks that determine recovery goals. This is necessary to identify progress in species recovery and will help make the ESA a useful tool in conservation rather than an obstacle. In addition, the legislation requires much needed transparency in science and in litigation, which is essential. We are hopeful it will help to curb the current "sue and settle" process that has contributed to the current broken system.

We are very supportive of the provisions in the draft legislation that elevates the role of state and local governments in planning for, and executing, species conservation efforts. This is long overdue. The involvement of state wildlife agencies is critical and will do more to strengthen species conservation efforts than the current approach. We greatly appreciate the emphasis the bill gives to states as equal partners to the federal government and believe it will improve the ESA.

Another very important provision in the draft legislation that we are pleased with is the requirement for a seven-year work plan for species and the requirement that all species receive a priority designation. We believe this will allow time for effective plans to be developed and executed. The provision is further strengthened by the language that allows the Secretary to postpone response to a petition or review of the status of the species until the last day of its established work plan.

Lastly, we are pleased to see the legislation rewards proactive landowners who participate in conservation agreements. The requirement that any such agreements entered into with, or endorsed by, the Secretary be considered as regulatory mechanisms when deciding on whether to list a species as threatened or endangered is very welcome.

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*amy@wyowool.com*

The Wyoming Wool Growers Association supports the proposed legislation as drafted and is willing to provide whatever help is needed to move it forward. We are extremely grateful to you, Chairman Barrasso, for your effort to make these common-sense improvements to the currently unworkable ESA. If you need further information, please don't hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy W. Hendrickson".

Amy W. Hendrickson  
Executive Director

/awh