



August 31, 2018

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

Dear Chairman Barrasso:

On behalf of the Colorado Pork Producers Council, and the over 1000 pork producers across the state of Colorado, I write in support of the proposed "Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018". The discussion draft bill would amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) to increase transparency, increase regulatory certainty and reauthorize the Act.

We recognize that the Act has lost its original intent of encouraging states and other interested parties to work for solutions, through Federal Assistance and a system of incentives; and has progressed towards an approach that is driven by litigation and sometimes inappropriate interpretation by federal agencies. Rural communities have greatly suffered as a result of these unintended consequences.

We are encouraged by the Committees efforts to reassess the original intent of the ESA, which has evolved into a program that comes at the expense of agriculture.

Efforts of the Species Conservation and Endangered Species Act Initiative, since 2015, has made the entire effort species conservation effort more transparent and constructive. Activities and efforts to foster an inclusive and bipartisan dialogue on how to improve implementation of the ESA and better incentivize species conservation efforts to avoid the need to list species in the first place are a much-needed approach that benefits agriculture and at-risk species.

The think tank approach that is emphasizes efforts like these, within the proposed ESA Amendment of 2018 is encouraging to all agricultural producers. We strongly support the improved state-federal consultation provision relating to conservation and recovery of wildlife

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included in the draft. This encourages a regulatory certainty. The conservation agreements, candidate conservation agreements with assurances, and safe harbor agreements are also an important part of this revision we support.

Most importantly, the proposed bill includes practical improvements to the program that strengthens the conservation decision making process through increased transparency, prioritized resources, and transparency of management. We certainly are encouraged by these proposed Act changes.

We look forward to working with you to further advance this important legislation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at jkelly@copork.org or (970) 356-4964.

Sincerely,



Joyce R. Kelly
Executive Director