



◻ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ◻

Gordon S. Myers, Executive Director

June 29, 2018

The Honorable Senator John Barrasso
United States Senate
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Barrasso,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on draft legislation entitled the “Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018.” Also, thank you for your thoughtful and careful leadership in identifying opportunities for meaningful Endangered Species Act (ESA) modernization. Your efforts along with those of the Western Governors’ Association, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and others have led to a well vetted set of goals that are reflected in the proposed legislation.

I support the draft legislation, which I believe, would improve implementation of the ESA and most importantly, improve recovery of listed threatened and endangered species. The proposed legislation would increase opportunities for state fish and wildlife agencies to take a more formal and active role in all aspects of ESA implementation, improve optimization of financial and human resources by instituting a prioritization system for addressing listing petitions, reviews, and determinations, and encourage conservation actions by increasing regulatory certainty.

As a state wildlife agency director serving in the southeastern United States, I am particularly mindful of the vital importance of private land conservation. In my home state of North Carolina, more than ninety-percent of the land-base is privately owned; therefore, the future of fish and wildlife in North Carolina relies heavily upon those landowners. The proposed legislation would help break down barriers of regulatory inflexibility and uncertainty thus promoting a balance of shared conservation values and landowner objectives. Since ESA inception in 1973, we have learned much about the conservation of listed species, their recovery needs, and how to facilitate, not discount, private landowner involvement. The proposed legislation would enable application of that knowledge to better achieve the conservation and recovery of listed species.

Thank you again for your thoughtful leadership on ESA modernization and for the opportunity to provide input on proposed legislation. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Gordon Myers