



Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
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June 6, 2018

The Honorable John Barrasso, Chair
Environment & Public Works Committee
U.S. Senate
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper, Ranking Member
Environment & Public Works Committee
U.S. Senate
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts Support of legislation “The Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018”

Dear Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, representing Wyoming’s 34 local Conservation Districts, I write to you to express our strong support for the Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018.

Wyoming’s Conservation Districts are local political subdivisions of state government authorized under §§ 11-16-101 *et. seq.*, and governed by 170 elected district officials. The Districts are charged with the responsibility of providing for the conservation of Wyoming’s natural resources through the delivery of technical and program assistance to private landowners and as cooperating agencies with state and federal land management agencies. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, wildlife habitat conservation.

The Districts have over 70 years of experience in implementing on-the-ground conservation projects and practices. In the past 10 to 20 years we have witnessed the focus change from on-the-ground conservation of species and their habitat to in-the-courtroom litigation, appeals, and lawsuit settlement agreements. There have been far more resources by federal agencies dedicated to legal fees and buy-offs than there has been habitat. We find ourselves increasingly diverted from what we do best, which is work hand in hand with landowners and our state and federal partners, to commenting, intervening and responding to litigation or the threat of litigation.

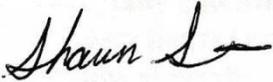
The Conservation Districts, working in conjunction with private landowners, agencies and organizations such as the US Fish & Wildlife Partners for Wildlife Program, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, USDA Natural

Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018; US Senate Environment & Public Works Committee

Resources Conservation Service, Wyoming Wildlife & Natural Resource Trust, and several non governmental entities, have played an important role in real species conservation through on the ground project implementation.

The Association has been actively engaged in the Western Governor's Association's Endangered Species Initiative. This effort has brought diverse interests together to identify constructive changes to the Act to more successfully protect, conserve and recover species and their habitats. This legislation clearly reflects those principals and we believe provides an important recognition of the role of state and local governments, and ultimately landowners, play in species protection. Further, it also recognizes that locally based approaches to species protection provide our greatest chance of success.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shaun Sims", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shaun Sims
President