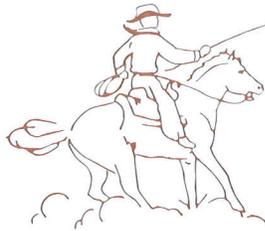


North Dakota
STOCKMEN'S ASSOCIATION



407 SOUTH SECOND STREET
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA 58504
Ph: (701) 223-2522
Fax: (701) 223-2587
e-mail: ndsas@ndstockmen.org
www.ndstockmen.org

July 10, 2018

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

Dear Sen. Barrasso:

The North Dakota Stockmen's Association is an 89-year-old trade organization representing more than 3,000 cattle-ranching families in North Dakota. We write to thank you for introducing the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Amendments of 2018 legislation. Our organization has long supported reforms to the ESA, which has fallen short of its purpose to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. In fact, fewer than 2 percent of the species listed under the ESA since its inception has been successfully recovered. Additionally, this wildlife recovery program has often been hijacked by litigation-happy activist organizations to advance extreme, non-science-based agendas. This has burdened landowners, livestock producers and local communities and done little to support the very species the ESA was designed for.

The ESA Amendments of 2018 bill – crafted after the Western Governors Association's ESA resolution – represents some long-sought reforms to the ESA, as well as a bipartisan collaborative solution to modernizing the ESA and putting more decision-making authority in the hands of the locals who interact with species most frequently.

In our view, the bill's greatest features are that it 1) provides greater authority to state and local governments in crafting and implementing recovery plans; 2) creates dedicated recovery teams for each listed species tasked with charting the pathway to delisting; 3) increases transparency in the litigation process; and 4) requires state consultation regarding 10(j) experimental populations.

Our members take pride in their environmental stewardship and species conservation and recovery efforts. For generations, cattle ranchers have dedicated themselves to improving the landscapes where livestock and wildlife call home. However, we have been frustrated how ESA has been implemented and often sabotaged by disingenuous interests who have used it instead to leverage agendas that have been harmful not only to landowners, livestock producers and local communities, but the very species the ESA is designed to fortify.

This bill will bring forth a refreshing change and bring to the table the local stakeholders who are critical in crafting recovery plans that are workable and that will yield results.

We encourage your committee's swift passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Warren Zenker".

Warren Zenker, President

CC: Sen. John Hoeven
Sen. Heidi Heitkamp
Rep. Kevin Cramer