



NEW MEXICO ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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July 3, 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: New Mexico 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 New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts (NMACD) board of directors, I write to you to express our strong support for the Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018.

New Mexico's Conservation Districts are local political subdivisions of state government authorized under NMSA 73-20-24 thru 48 and governed by over 300 elected district officials. The Districts are charged with the responsibility of providing for the conservation of New Mexico'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. The Conservation Districts, working in conjunction with private landowners, agencies and organizations such as the New Mexico Game & Fish Department, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management and hundreds of private landowners, have played an important role in real species conservation through on the ground project implementation of the "Restore New Mexico program."

NMACD has several policies and position statements concerning the Endangered Species Act. Our policies call for any kind of relief that can put more conservation on the ground, keep farmers and ranchers on the land and cut down on the enormous amount of litigation and government waste. We feel that private landowners can do more to protect, conserve and recover species and their habitats with voluntary incentive-based conservation instead of more regulations. 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 cursive script that reads "Jim Berlier".

Jim Berlier, NMACD President