



OHIO CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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July 9, 2018

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

Dear Chairman Barrasso:

The Ohio Cattlemen's Association (OCA), representing cattle farm families throughout Ohio would like to express our support for the Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018. OCA serves as the voice of the state's beef cattle business including cattle breeders, producers and feeders.

According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, "the purpose of the ESA is to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend." While a commendable and important goal, data indicates that fewer than 2% of the species listed under the Act since its inception have been successfully recovered. What was originally intended to be a wildlife recovery program has instead become a toolbox of litigation-ready opportunities for agenda-driven outside groups and individuals to exert control over proper policy making. Policies and mandates, often crafted by legal settlement rather than scientific data, have become the norm.

This approach is a key contributor to the ESA's dreadful success rate and its burden on local communities and land managers. As a result, groups across the political and conservation spectrum have called for updates to the ESA aimed at solving these problems. OCA supports the Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018 that was crafted to follow the Western Governor's Association's ESA Resolution which was passed on a bipartisan basis after years of engaging stakeholders from all ends of the political spectrum – including environmentalists and conservationists. It calls on Congress to make the ESA work for the 21st Century by putting more decision-making authority in the hands of the locals who interact with species most frequently.

The Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018 takes a critical step forward in modernizing the ESA by doing just that – giving more power to state and local governments to make decisions based on their area's unique landscapes, individual needs, and conditions on the ground. This emphasis on local involvement ensures that those with firsthand knowledge of a habitat area can provide critical insights to the creation of recovery plans. Furthermore, locals are the best equipped to predict, assess, and quickly react to changing conditions for the benefit of species.

As land managers, Ohio cattle farmers take great pride in their integral role in species conservation and recovery. For generations, livestock producers have been dedicated to improving the health of landscapes where wildlife call home. Over the years, they have grown frustrated by the lack of commonsense ESA implementation and being put on the sidelines while those decisions are made. This legislation will help bring them back to the table to craft recovery plans that are workable and produce favorable results.

The Ohio Cattlemen's Association appreciates the opportunity to provide our input on behalf of our members. We urge swift passage of the Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sasha Rittenhouse

Sasha Rittenhouse
President
Ohio Cattlemen's Association



An affiliate of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the Beef Improvement Federation

