

# Black Hills Forest Resource Association

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July 20, 2018

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

Senator Barrasso:

The Black Hills Forest Resource Association and our members thank you for your continued work to modernize the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to improve its functionality in protecting species through increased involvement and additional information from states. As the recent mountain pine beetle epidemic in the Black Hills wains, the ability to implement forest management projects in a timely manner remains critical.

Although the original intent of the ESA was well-intended it is now used to delay or stop critical forest management actions that benefit a myriad of other species and, in many cases, the very species the ESA purports to protect. Additionally, the Fish and Wildlife Service does not have all the needed resources to address the continuous petitions to list species under the ESA. Far too often, the FWS workplan is dictated by lawsuits and settlements which reduces transparency and results in questionable decisions.

States have a vested interest in the effective management of natural and wildlife resources within their borders. However, input from individual states is often discounted due to a lack of involvement in the listing process. States deserve a more integrated role in the species listing process and subsequent recovery plans for protected species.

The BHFRA supports your proposed amendments to the ESA that would 1) Enhance the federal-state partnership 2) Encourage conservation activities through regulatory certainty 3) Strengthen conservation decision-making through increased transparency 4) Optimize conservation through resource prioritization and 5) Conduct further studies to improve conservation.

The BHFRA appreciates the efforts to amend the ESA back into a functioning law with regulations that benefit all species while encouraging vital forest management activities.

Thank you,



Ben Wudtke  
Executive Director