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**TEXAS
CATTLE
FEEDERS
ASSOCIATION**

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

Dear Chairman Barrasso:

Texas Cattle Feeders Association (TCFA) supports the Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018 and urges swift passage of this important legislation. The Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018 is a critical step forward in modernizing the Endangered Species Act (ESA), providing state and local governments with more authority to make decisions based on their areas' 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 regarding 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.

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 laudable and important goal, data indicates that fewer than 2% of the species listed under the ESA 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 top-down approach is a key contributor to the ESA's abysmal success rate and its burden on land owners and local communities. As a result, groups across the political and conservation spectrum have called for updates to the ESA aimed at solving these problems. The Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018 closely aligns with the Western Governors Association's bipartisan resolution – passed after years of collaboration with impacted stakeholders including local governments, environmental interest groups and industry leaders – calling 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.

TCFA represents 200 cattle feedyards in Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico which feed and market roughly six million head of cattle annually and account for 30 percent of the nation's fed beef production. Cattle producers play an integral part in species conservation and recovery and take great pride in their role. For generations, these men and women have been dedicated to improving wildlife habitat and the health of their lands. 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 actually help protect and recover imperiled species and ecosystems. TCFA urges swift passage of the Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018.

Sincerely,

Jason Peeler
Chairman