

September 18, 2024

RE: PLEASE VOTE NO ON H.R. 9533, THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT AMENDMENTS OF 2024

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our organizations and our millions of members and supporters we are writing to urge you to vote NO on H.R. 9533, the “Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2024,” scheduled to be marked up in the House Natural Resources Committee tomorrow, September 19, 2024.

The planet is facing an alarming and catastrophic worldwide biodiversity crisis, largely driven by humankind. Development, habitat loss, exploitation, pollution and invasive species now threaten as many as one million species with extinction. These threats are exacerbated by climate change, which is increasingly impacting our planet.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is our most effective tool to prevent extinction. Nearly all species listed under the ESA have been saved from disappearing forever and hundreds are on the path to recovery. The bill that will be considered by the Committee tomorrow does not strengthen the ability of the ESA to conserve imperiled species. At a time when we should be redoubling our commitment to protect biodiversity and stop extinction, this bill would undermine key provisions of the ESA and result in significant harm to at-risk species and their habitats, further exacerbating the environmental challenges we are facing today.

There are numerous provisions in H.R. 9533 that would dramatically weaken the ESA and lead to decreased protections for threatened and endangered species, ultimately condemning them to continued slow declines and challenges. It would significantly rewrite key portions of the ESA to prioritize politics over science and inappropriately shift responsibility for key implementation decisions from the federal government to the states, many of which do not have sufficient resources or legal mechanisms in place to take the lead in conserving listed species. It would place significant new administrative burdens on already over-burdened agencies. It would turn the current process for listing and recovering threatened and endangered species into a far lengthier process that precludes judicial review of key decisions.

More specifically, among other things, the bill would:

- dramatically extend the timeline for listing decisions while imperiled species continue to slide, meanwhile fast-tracking delistings;
- block automatic take protection for threatened terrestrial and freshwater species;

- significantly increase allowable taking of threatened species, which then may decline toward endangered status;
- diminish federal agencies' traditional role in listed species management;
- narrow the scope of critical habitat designations in multiple harmful ways;
- increase the role of the ESA's ineffective "Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances" program and decrease its available protections;
- obliterate science-based decision making by converting all state-submitted data into "best available science," regardless of its quality;
- erode public accountability in wildlife management; and
- preclude mitigation for certain agency actions that harm species.

Once again, we urge you to vote NO on this damaging bill which would dramatically weaken the ESA and make it harder, if not impossible, to achieve the progress we must make to address the alarming rate of extinction our planet now faces. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Alaska Wilderness League Action
 American Bird Conservancy
 Animal Legal Defense Fund
 Animal Welfare Institute
 Animal Wonders KC
 Bat Conservation International
 Born Free USA
 CalWild
 Center for Biological Diversity
 Center for Food Safety
 Christian Council of Delaware
 Clean Water Action
 Climate Justice Alliance
 Conservation Law Foundation
 DC Natives
 Defenders of Wildlife
 Earthjustice
 Endangered Habitats League
 Endangered Species Coalition
 Environmental Center of San Diego
 Environmental Protection Information Center
 FOUR PAWS USA
 Friends of Blackwater, Inc.
 Friends of Merrymeeting Bay

Friends of the Earth
Gaviota Coast Conservancy
Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project
Great Lakes Wildlife Alliance
Grow Native Massachusetts
Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association
Healthy Gulf
Heartwood
Howling for Wolves
Humane Society Legislative Fund
Humane Society of the United States
International Fund for Animal Welfare
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
International Wildlife Coexistence Network
Kettle Range Conservation Group
Klamath Forest Alliance
League of Conservation Voters
Los Angeles Audubon Society
Los Padres ForestWatch
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Maryland Pesticide Education Network
Mass Audubon
Massachusetts Pollinator Network
National Ocean Protection Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council
New Hampshire Audubon
North Cascades Conservation Council
Nuclear Information and Resource Service
NYC Plover Project
Oceana
Ocean Defense Initiative
Oregon Wild
Orleans Audubon Society
Partnership for Policy Integrity
People & Pollinators Initiative
Pollinator Friendly Alliance
Project Coyote
Resource Renewal Institute
Re:wild Your Campus
Rocky Mountain Wild
Save Animals Facing Extinction

Save the Manatee Club
Sierra Club
Silvix Resources
Southern Environmental Law Center
Species Unite
The Conservation Angler
The #RelistWolves Campaign
The Urban Wildlands Group
The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation
Trap Free Montana, Inc.
Turtle Island Restoration Network
United Plant Savers
Voices of Wildlife in NH
Waterkeeper Alliance
Western Watersheds Project
WildEarth Guardians
Wildlife Conservation Society
Wolf Conservation Center
Wyoming Wildlife Advocates