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 Angles 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