



July 24, 2023

The Honorable Cliff Bentz
Chair
Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water,
Wildlife and Fisheries
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water,
Wildlife and Fisheries
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bentz, Ranking Member Huffman, and Members of the Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries:

On behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors, a national construction industry trade association with 68 chapters representing more than 22,000 members, we appreciate your efforts to examine the Endangered Species Act and thank you for holding the hearing, “ESA at 50: The Destructive Cost of the ESA” last week.

Additionally, ABC thanks the Western Caucus’ for launching the Endangered Species Act Working Group and supports its goals to examine how the ESA is implemented by federal agencies, the practical impacts on the American people, how litigation is driving ESA decision-making, and how success is defined under the ESA.

ABC supports the Endangered Species Act’s purpose of protecting species threatened with extinction and recognizes the need for science-based, data-driven actions that conserve those species and the habitats on which they depend. ABC knows that much-needed reforms to modernize the ESA and make ESA consultations more efficient and effective will be required as the Biden administration looks to implement over \$1 trillion in federal spending for critical infrastructure, energy and technology projects throughout the country. The ABC-supported RESTART Act (S. 1449), introduced in the U.S. Senate, addresses some of the much-needed reforms to the ESA to make the consultation process more efficient. S. 1449 would shorten timelines for consultations and allow states to assume the responsibility of consultations under the ESA to allow for more local input and reduce the burden on the federal government. ABC encourages this subcommittee to consider the RESTART Act and further efforts to improve and modernize the ESA to better serve our nation’s communities and endangered species.

ABC members stand ready for the opportunity to build and maintain America’s infrastructure to the benefit of the communities that it will serve and appreciates your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kristen Swearingen', written in a cursive style.

Kristen Swearingen
Vice President, Legislative & Political Affairs