

9 July 2024

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources
1324-A Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Letter for the Record: Legislative Hearing on the *ESA Amendments Act of 2024*

Dear Representatives Westerman and Grijalva,

The Southern Environmental Law Center writes in opposition to the *ESA Amendments Act of 2024*, which, in codifying several Trump Administration frameworks and definitions, would have the practical effect of replacing science-based review and public input with political decision-making. By shifting the burden of the management of listed species from federal agencies to states, the bill also risks deferring vital species and habitat management to programs with varying and uncoordinated missions.

In addition, the bill dramatically extends the timeline for listing decisions while fast-tracking delistings, blocks automatic take protection for species, increases allowable taking of threatened species, and narrows the scope of critical habitat designations in multiple harmful ways.

More than 250 species across the Southeast are protected by the Endangered Species Act, and these and many more are threatened by a mass extinction crisis, fueled by climate change and dramatic habitat loss. This bill would significantly impact agencies' ability to respond to that crisis, and for that reason we must strongly oppose it.

Sincerely,



Anders Reynolds
Federal Legislative Director
Southern Environmental Law Center

Cc: Rep. Cliff Bentz, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries
Rep. Jared Huffman, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries