



forestry, fisheries & the environment

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Chair Bruce Westerman
Subcommittee Chair Harriet Hageman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
United States

Dear Chair Westerman and Chair Hageman:

LETTER OF SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT (ESA) AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2025

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) Amendments Act of 2025 refers.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of South Africa, I am writing to express our official support for the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Amendments Act of 2025 as proposed by Congressman Westerman, particularly Sections 601 and 602, which seek to harmonize U.S. wildlife regulations with international conservation frameworks, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). These amendments are an important step toward ensuring that conservation efforts remain science-based, effective, and beneficial for both wildlife and local communities.

As one of the world's leading conservation nations and home to significant populations of African elephants, rhinoceroses, lions, leopards, and other iconic species, South Africa remains committed to sustainable conservation practices that balance biodiversity protection, responsible resource use, and socio-economic development. The ESA Amendments Act of 2025 would enhance global conservation efforts by: Aligning ESA Regulations with International Conservation Standards:

- By removing stricter domestic measures for non-native species already covered under CITES, the proposed amendments ensure that wildlife management remains science-driven and sustainable.
- Many range states, including South Africa, implement strict conservation frameworks in line with CITES, and this alignment would promote efficient, evidence-based species management.



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Furthermore, it will reduce regulatory barriers to conservation programs, where Section 601 will streamline permitting processes, facilitating responsible international trade that supports conservation funding, anti-poaching efforts, and wildlife conservation initiatives.

The amendments will enhance collaboration between range states and conservation stakeholders, ensuring that regulated trade remains a positive force for conservation. Section 602 will strengthen the conservation framework by replacing the subjective “enhancement” requirement with the CITES Non-Detriment Finding (NDF) standard, a globally recognized science-based measure of sustainable use. This approach provides clarity and consistency in conservation governance, ensuring that responsible and regulated activities contribute to species conservation.

South Africa has successfully demonstrated that well-regulated, sustainable-use conservation models generate critical funding for wildlife protection, habitat restoration, and community-based conservation programs. Therefore, by aligning ESA provisions with CITES requirements, the proposed amendments will help secure ongoing funding for conservation initiatives that benefit both wildlife and rural communities.

The Republic of South Africa recognizes the importance of strong conservation partnerships and believes that the ESA Amendments Act of 2025 offers a balanced, science-driven approach to species protection. We urge your support for this legislation, which will reinforce global conservation efforts while ensuring sustainable management of wildlife populations.

We appreciate the United States' leadership in wildlife conservation and look forward to continued collaboration on initiatives that promote the long-term survival of endangered species and the well-being of local communities.

Yours sincerely



Ms Olga Kumalo

DESIGNATION: CHIEF DIRECTOR (ACTING): BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND PERMITTING

DATE: 24/03/2025