



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

To: House Committee on Natural Resources Republican Members
From: House Committee on Natural Resources Republican Staff
Date: Monday, December 15, 2025
Subject: Markup of 4 Bills

The House Committee on Natural Resources will hold a markup on **Wednesday, December 17, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., in room 1324 Longworth House Office Building**. The bills to be considered include: H.R. 1897 (Rep. Westerman); H.R. 4284 (Rep. Leger Fernandez); H.R. 5103 (Rep. McGuire); and H.R. 5910 (Rep. Hageman).

Member offices are requested to notify Madeline Kelley (Madeline.Kelley@mail.house.gov) by 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, to confirm their Member's attendance at the markup.

I. KEY MESSAGES & TOPLINE ACTIONS

- Bills expected to move by regular order: H.R. 1897 (Rep. Westerman), "*ESA Amendments Act of 2025*" and H.R. 5103 (Rep. McGuire), "*Make the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful Act*".
- Please note that H.R. 1897 and H.R. 5103 will each have an amendment in the nature of a substitute (ANS). Members should ensure that amendments are drafted to the ANS.
- Bills expected to move by unanimous consent: H.R. 4284 (Rep. Leger Fernandez), "*Small Cemetery Conveyance Act*" and H.R. 5910 (Rep. Hageman), To authorize leases of up to 99 years for land held in trust for federally recognized Indian Tribes.

II. EXPECTED LEGISLATION

H.R. 1897 (Rep. Westerman), "*ESA Amendments Act of 2025*"

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was passed by Congress in 1973 with the noble goal of saving species on the brink of extinction and recovering them to the point where they no longer needed protection. Unfortunately, over its 50-plus-year history, the ESA has achieved an abysmal 3-percent recovery success rate and has become a blunt instrument for restricting land use and projects essential to local economies.¹ It is time for Congress to enact meaningful reforms to the ESA.

¹ Katherine Wright & Shawn Regan, "Missing the Mark: How the Endangered Species Act Falls Short of Its Own Recovery Goals," Property and Environment Research Center, July 26, 2023, <https://perc.org/2023/07/26/missing-the-mark/>.

H.R. 1897 returns scientific integrity, common sense, and consensus to the process of listing species and designating critical habitat. The bill emphasizes recovery by establishing a pathway for state management and delisting, linking progress toward recovery goals with regulatory relief. By providing affected stakeholders with clear metrics to measure success, and by rewarding achievement with red tape reduction, H.R. 1897 encourages private investment in species recovery. Further, the legislation adds certainty to the delisting process by prohibiting judicial review in the 5-year, post-delisting monitoring period, thwarting radical environmental groups from undoing years of successful recovery efforts through lawfare.

H.R. 1897 streamlines the ESA permitting process by providing clear, consistent guidelines to ensure that consultations focus on the project itself rather than a litany of unrelated effects. The bill also codifies a definition of “best available science” to ensure that biased science cannot be called upon to justify unscientific ESA decision-making. In addition, the bill requires that any project modifications proposed by the federal government during an ESA consultation be appropriate for the underlying project, technically feasible, and minimize economic burden on the applicant.

H.R. 1897 will also prevent the federal government from using the ESA as a weapon to impose costly regulations without Congressional authorization, aligning the law with the Supreme Court's historic decision in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*.²

At markup, an ANS will be offered that includes updates and technical changes that further the bill's goals. The ANS also incorporates language from the Trump administration's recently proposed rulemakings concerning how critical habitat is designated, what should be considered when making regulations for threatened species, and how ESA Section 7 consultations should be conducted.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Doug Levine (Doug.Levine@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 5103 (Rep. McGuire), “*Make the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful Act*”

Washington, D.C., was created to be both the permanent seat of our federal government and to serve as a powerful symbol of national pride and strength. Sadly, D.C.'s crime rate has skyrocketed in recent years, making it one of the most dangerous and deadly cities in America. In 2023, under unified Democrat local leadership, D.C. experienced 274 homicides, its deadliest year in two decades.³ In fact, D.C.'s murder rate rose more than 35 percent from 2022 to 2023, while the national homicide rate decreased by 15 percent over the same period.⁴ In 2024, there

² 603 U.S. 369 (2024).

³ Emma Davies, Jasmine Hilton, and Peter Hermann, “2023 Was District’s Deadliest Year in More Than Two Decades: The City Recorded 40 Homicides per 100,000 Residents, with Victims in Every Ward, from Babies to the Elderly,” The Washington Post, January 1, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/interactive/2024/dc-crime-homicide-victims-shooting-violence/>.

⁴ Eric Levenson & Mark Morales, “Homicides dropped by over 10% in America’s biggest cities in 2023,” CNN, January 5, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/04/us/homicide-crime-declines-cities-2023/index.html>.

were 29,348 crimes reported in D.C., including 5,139 vehicle thefts, 3,469 violent offenses, 2,113 robberies, and 1,026 assaults with a deadly weapon.⁵ Juvenile arrests have also steadily risen each year since 2020, and the nearly 200 juveniles that were arrested in 2024 “had prior violent crime arrests.”⁶

Rising crime has included increased desecration of D.C.’s public spaces, a development that disproportionately affects federal lands. Almost a quarter of D.C. consists of parks or open space, with the National Park Service (NPS) managing approximately 90 percent of that area, or roughly 6,700 acres.⁷ Homeless encampments in D.C. have increasingly overrun NPS-managed parks and green spaces.⁸ These locations—dedicated to public enjoyment and recreation—have become havens for drug abuse, mental illness, vandalism, and violent incidents.⁹ NPS-managed land and monuments have also suffered from violent and destructive rioting. In recent years, NPS has been forced to remove explicit, derogatory, and offensive graffiti from the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, the World War II Memorial, and the D.C. War Memorial.¹⁰ In 2024, D.C. witnessed a series of pro-Hamas riots that produced widespread graffiti and other acts of vandalism at federal buildings, monuments, and statues.¹¹

H.R. 5103 addresses the dire situation in our nation’s capital by codifying and expanding upon key provisions of President Trump’s Executive Order (EO) 14252, “Making the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful.”¹² This EO launched a coordinated effort to restore safety, dignity, and aesthetic appeal to our nation’s capital. Section 2 of the bill tasks the Department of the Interior with developing and implementing a program to beautify D.C. by removing graffiti and restoring monuments, fountains, memorials, and public areas. Section 3 establishes a lasting framework for federal and local cooperation in D.C. by creating the D.C. Safe and Beautiful Commission. The commission will coordinate across federal agencies and D.C., Virginia, and Maryland to identify actions needed to ensure full enforcement of federal, local, immigration, and criminal laws within D.C. The U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government

⁵ “District Crime Data at a Glance,” Metropolitan Police, <https://mpdc.dc.gov/dailycrime>.

⁶ Mark Segraves, “DC police unit to focus on stopping juvenile crimes before they happen,” NBC Washington, April 3, 2025, <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/dc-police-unit-to-focus-on-stopping-juvenile-crimes-before-they-happen/3883054/>.

⁷ National Capital Planning Commission, “About Washington’s Parks and Open Space”, https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/CapitalSpace_Washingtons_Parks_and_Open_Space.pdf.

⁸ Kriston Capps, “In Trump’s DC Crackdown, National Park Service Leads Homeless Sweeps”, Bloomberg, August 22, 2025, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-08-22/dc-crime-crackdown-deputizes-national-park-service-in-homeless-sweeps>.

⁹ Nick Iannelli, “Homeless encampments being cleared from Northwest DC parks due to reports of drugs, violence,” WTOP News, August 17, 2021, <https://wtop.com/dc/2021/08/dc-homeless-encampments-being-cleared-due-to-reports-of-drugs-violence/>.

¹⁰ “National Park Service Removing Graffiti at Lincoln Memorial,” National Park Service, August 15, 2017, <https://www.nps.gov/nama/learn/news/lincoln-vandalism.htm>. “National Park Service Removing Graffiti at Four Memorials Along the National Mall,” National Park Service, February 21, 2017, <https://www.nps.gov/nama/learn/news/graffiti-on-national-mall.htm>. “National Park Service Removing Graffiti at Four Memorials Along the National Mall,” ABCNews7, September 20, 2022, <https://wjla.com/news/local/washington-monument-red-paint-defaced-with-graphic-message-vandalized-vandalism-graffiti-spray-national-mall-dc-park-police-crime-district-lincoln-washington>. NationalMallNPS X Account, May 31, 2020, <https://x.com/NationalMallNPS/status/1267124873085804544>.

¹¹ Andrea Swalec, “‘What happened at Union Station was vile’: DC protest vandalism, flag burning condemned”, NBC Washington, July 25, 2024, <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/after-dc-pro-palestinian-protests-crews-clean-spray-paint-and-replace-american-flag/3674796/>.

¹² Executive Office of the President, Executive Order 14252, March 27, 2025, “Make the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful” <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/04/03/2025-05837/making-the-district-of-columbia-safe-and-beautiful>.

Reform, which also received a referral on this bill, favorably reported the legislation out of committee on September 10, 2025.¹³ An ANS will be offered by Chairman Westerman to execute a technical amendment.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Aniela Butler (Aniela@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 5910 (Rep. Hageman), To authorize leases of up to 99 years for land held in trust for federally recognized Indian Tribes.

H.R. 5910 would amend the Long-Term Leasing Act (LTLA)¹⁴ to authorize any federally recognized Indian Tribe to lease land held in trust for its benefit for up to 99 years, subject to approval of the Secretary of the Interior.

In 1834, with the enactment of the Non-Intercourse Act,¹⁵ land transactions with Indians were prohibited unless authorized by Congress. Over time, these restrictions came to apply primarily to lands held in trust by the United States for the benefit of individual Indians or Indian Tribes, and to lands where the land title was subject to a restriction against alienation.

In 1955, Congress passed the LTLA, which generally authorizes any Indian lands held in trust or subject to a restriction against alienation to be leased by the Indian owner for non-grazing purposes, subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, for up to 25 years.¹⁶ As originally enacted, the LTLA also allowed non-grazing leases to be renewed for one additional 25-year term, for a total of 50 years.¹⁷

Lease terms of up to 99 years are often necessary for long-term commercial projects and certain financing arrangements. Ensuring that Tribes can negotiate on equal footing as other landholders can clear the way for further economic development, especially in rural or remote areas. Congress has amended the LTLA more than 50 times to adjust leasing terms and to authorize specific Indian lands or Tribes to lease for up to 99 years, subject to the Secretary of the Interior's approval. Most recently, Congress extended this authority to the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation,¹⁸ the Navajo Nation,¹⁹ and the Pueblo of Santa Clara.²⁰ By proactively extending this authority to all federally recognized Tribes, economic development plans can proceed more efficiently.

¹³ "Markup Wrap Up: Oversight Committee Advances Legislation to Codify President Trump's Efforts to Make D.C. Safe and Beautiful," House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, September 11, 2025, www.oversight.house.gov/release/markup-wrap-up-oversight-committee-advances-legislation-to-codify-president-trumps-efforts-to-make-d-c-safe-and-beautiful.

¹⁴ 25 U.S.C. 415.

¹⁵ 25 U.S.C. 177.

¹⁶ Pub. Law No. 255. Ch. 615, Sec. 1, 69 Stat. 539.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Pub. Law No. 117-346.

¹⁹ Pub. Law No. 115-325.

²⁰ Pub. Law No. 115-227.

In the 118th Congress, the House of Representatives passed identical legislation, H.R. 1246, under suspension of the rules by voice vote. Hearing information from the 118th Congress, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

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H.R. 4284 (Rep. Leger Fernandez), “*Small Cemetery Conveyance Act*”

H.R. 4284, the “Small Cemetery Conveyance Act,” amends the Small Tract Act of 1983 to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to convey, without consideration, parcels of federal land, used or previously used as cemeteries, to state and local governments, Indian Tribes, and qualified land grant-merced communities.²¹ The Small Tract Act currently allows the Secretary of Agriculture to convey parcels smaller than 40 acres, which are difficult for the agency to administer efficiently. Many historic cemeteries, particularly out West, are located on or near federal lands, creating barriers for communities and Tribes seeking to maintain, access, expand, and protect these culturally significant sites.²² Expanding the Small Tract Act to allow the conveyance of cemeteries would help support rural communities running out of cemetery space, while reducing the federal estate. The bill prioritizes conveyances to entities with historic or cultural ties to certain cemeteries, while protecting federal interests through reversion authority if the property is used for purposes other than cemetery operations.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

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III. CBO SCORES

None available.

IV. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW (RAMSEYER)

[H.R. 1897](#)

[H.R. 5910](#)

[H.R. 4284](#)

²¹ P.L. 97-465.

²² DeSantis, Mark K., et al., “Indigenous Sacred Sites: Overview and Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service, March 14, 2025, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48452>.