

Chair Grijalva Statement

WOW Hearing on: "PAW and FIN Protection Act" and "Extinction Prevention Act"

September 24, 2019

- **Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairman Huffman, for holding this hearing.**
- **We are in the midst of an ongoing extinction crisis and the Trump Administration seems to be doing everything in its power to make sure it continues.**
- **The need to protect wildlife is not just about protecting cute animals. Biodiversity is directly linked to economic health, cultural values, food security, national security, and human well-being. Our lives and livelihoods depend on thriving biodiversity and we are losing species faster than we even realize.**
- **The Endangered Species Act is the strongest tool we have to prevent species from going extinct. It ensures that species that get listed, no matter what size or shape, get protections.**
- **The regulatory changes to the ESA by the Trump Administration undermine the very purpose of the**

ESA. They are short-sighted and would put more plants and wildlife on the brink of extinction.

- **First, the rules eliminate what we call the blanket 4(d) rule at the Fish and Wildlife Service – a rule intended to make sure a species listed as threatened is guaranteed protections to help them recover unless the agency develops a rule based on science to allow for some exemptions. Now, the default will be no guaranteed protections for threatened species.**
- **Second, the rules change the definition of foreseeable future, preventing the Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA from considering the impacts of climate change on wildlife. We know climate change is real and we are observing impacts of climate change to wildlife. It's incomprehensible for the Fish and Wildlife Service to ignore climate change while trying to recover species.**
- **The third concern I would like to bring up, but certainly not the last, is regarding the new allowance for the Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA to consider economic factors alongside species' listing decisions. The Endangered**

Species Act was very clear in this. The statute says that listing decisions shall be made solely on the best scientific information. Does the best available science say a species is threatened or endangered? If so, list it. That's how the ESA works. Listing decisions should be based on science, not industry interests or economic scare-tactics.

- **My bill, H.R. 4348, ensures that the Trump Administration's new rules will have no force or effect, retaining the integrity and purpose of the ESA.**
- **My other bill we are discussing today, the Extinction Prevention Act, simply recognizes several less-charismatic and severely underfunded species groups, including Pacific Island plants, Southwest desert fish, Eastern mussels, and North America butterflies. Every species deserves protection and resources. My bill simply makes more funding available for these underdog species.**
- **Thank you, Chairman Huffman, and thank you to our witnesses who are here with us today.**