

Questions of the Honorable Debbie Dingell
House Committee on Natural Resources

LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON H.R. 273, H.R. 274, H.R. 1569, H.R. 1983, H.R. 2026, H.R. 2325, H.R. 2773, H.R. 2793, H.R. 2848, H.R. 2872, H.R. 3075, H.R. 3128, H.R. 3135, H.R. 3396, AND H.R. 4458

July 29, 2021

MEMBER TESTIMONY ON PANEL 1

Thank you, Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member Bentz, for convening today's hearing that includes the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, bipartisan legislation I introduced with my colleague, Congressman Jeff Fortenberry, to address our nation's biodiversity crisis.

And it is a crisis. An estimated one-third of America's wildlife species are at an increased risk of extinction.

We're seeing the impact of this on bird populations, which have declined almost 30 percent in the United States and Canada since 1970.

And with over 40 percent of freshwater fish at risk, my home state of Michigan, the Great Lakes state, is facing unprecedented threats to its environmental heritage.

The cost of inaction is immense – the longer we wait to address these issues, the more resources we will ultimately need to safeguard our nation's wildlife.

Bold action is needed, and the Recovering America's Wildlife Act meets the moment by funding proactive, on-the-ground conservation efforts to meet the scale of the challenge we face.

The legislation provides approximately \$1.4 billion in dedicated, annual funding to the states, territories, and Native American tribes for proactive conservation efforts for the approximately 12,000 species of wildlife and plants identified under federally approved State Wildlife Action Plans.

This historic investment in our nation's wildlife will pay significant dividends. It will allow states to take proactive action that will prevent at-risk species from becoming endangered.

It will grow our \$887 billion outdoor economy that supports more than 7.6 million jobs and is fueled by the more than 100 million American hunters, anglers, birders, hikers, and other wildlife enthusiasts.

It also supports targeted efforts for our nation's most at-risk species and includes innovative conservation measures to safeguard America's wildlife.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act has the support of the leading conservation organizations, sportsmen's groups, environmental advocates and businesses for good reason – it utilizes proven funding mechanisms, boldly addresses pressing conservation needs, and prevents the need for more costly interventions in the future.

This legislation passed the Natural Resources Committee last Congress by a vote of 26-6, with a majority of both Democrats and Republicans supporting it.

The updated version of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act includes improvements, including made in last Congress's Manager's amendment, which further strengthen the provisions in the bill.

We have a conservation, economic, and moral rationale to act in order to protect and recover America's wildlife for future generations.

This is an opportunity to take historic action to address a pressing conservation need, and I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Thank you and I yield back.